



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

The Christian Life ;
OR,
Safety, Sunshine, and Strength.

BY
REV. MORTLOCK DANIELL,
Of Ramsgate.



600095041P



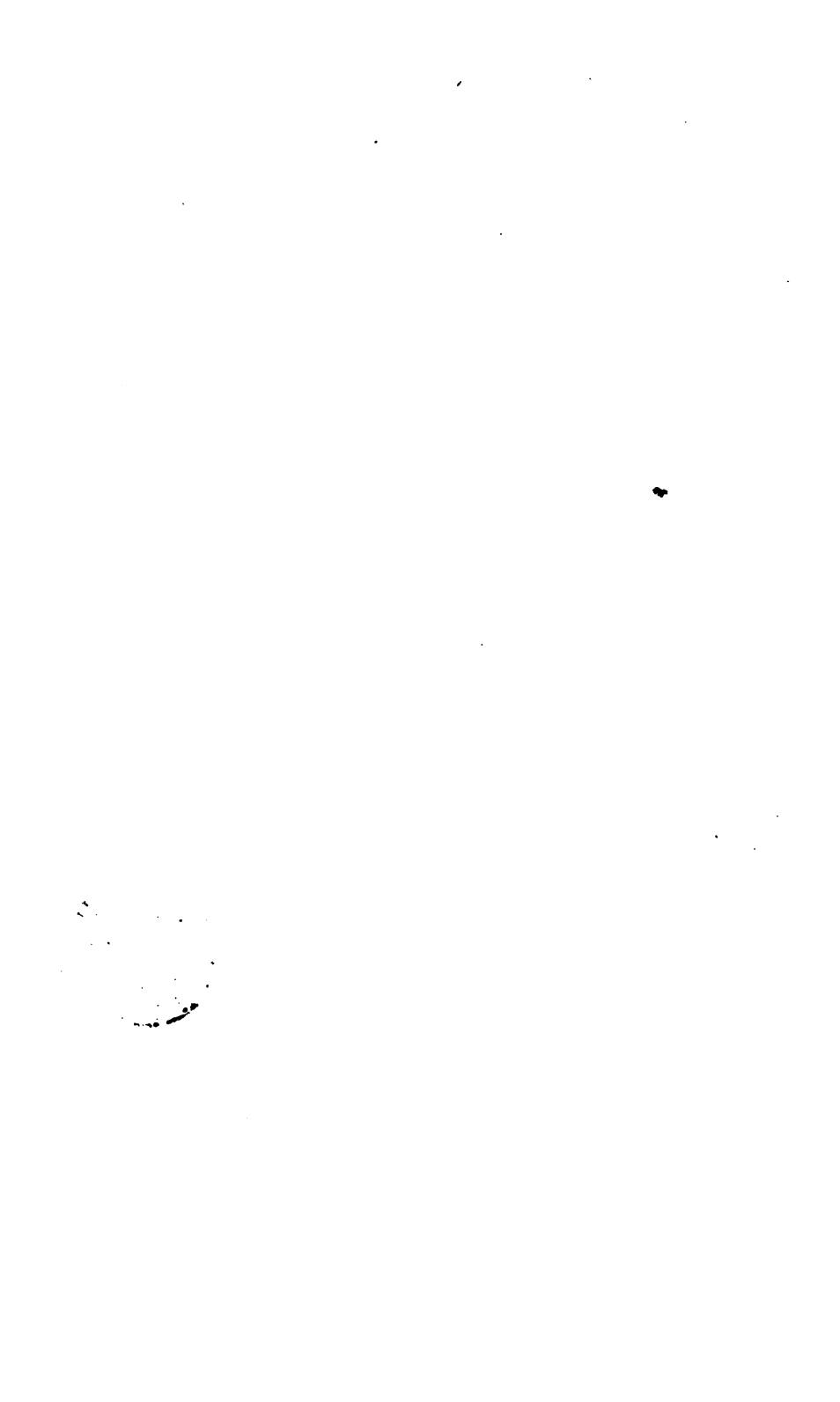


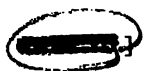


600095041P









THE CHRISTIAN LIFE;

OR,

SAFETY, SUNSHINE,

AND

STRENGTH.

BY

REV. MORTLOCK DANIELL,

OF RAMSGATE.

~~~~~  
THIRD THOUSAND.  
~~~~~



London:

JOHN FARQUHAR SHAW,

27, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, AND 36, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1856.

100. 9/ 314

LONDON:
PRINTED BY ALFRED BOOT, DOCKHEAD, SOUTHWARK.

ESAU HATED, JACOB LOVED.

“For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him that calleth! it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, ‘Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.’”—*Romans ix.*, 11, 12, 13.

I AM well aware in the consideration of my present subject, I expose myself to the invectives of many, who having been trained to a certain system of theology, determine to continue in it; who deem themselves the very pillars of its perpetuity, and not a few of whom, nevertheless, have neither had the candour, nor the patience, nor the requisite ability to search out its rightfulness or its wrong. An ignorant man imagines he soon understands everything, but a wise man, the more he investigates, the more he discovers his own deficiencies, and feels that he knows nothing as he ought to know it. Allow me, therefore, to premise that I have the highest confidence and the deepest reverence for the Bible. I hold it to be God’s mind, God’s breath, God’s only statute book to man. To believe the

Bible, however, is one thing; to believe man's interpretations of it, is another thing. And it is just because I value the Bible above all price, that I earnestly desire its speedy emancipation from all human trammels that the word of the Lord may run, have free course, and be glorified in winning back all mankind first to God, and then to one another.

Just because I know that light is sweet, I would have the light of the Sun of Righteousness uneclipsed by the clouds of sectarian collection, that a benighted world may bathe in the fulness of its perfect and unfettered beams. Too long have men considered to dissent from *them* is to dissent from the Bible. I despise the term dissenter in the religious vocabulary. There it is out of place. It belongs to the builders of Babel and not to believers in the Word of God. It was one of the insulting names of past times, and now ought to have no place among christians. None have a right to monopolise the term "Church." All are of the true church who receive God's truth in the love of it, and all have a right to think for themselves, and to form their own opinions upon every branch of divine revelation with modesty and charity.

It appears to us that the progress of true religion has been greatly impeded among all classes of society, especially among the educated and intelligent youth, and among the unlettered and hard working

peasantry, through not being sufficiently unfolded and enforced as a system of *love*. God is love. This is a biblical aphorism, and therefore, there can be nothing in Holy Scripture opposed to it; because the Bible does not deal out opposites. And if any passages *seem* to violate this glorious truth, it must be referred to our own short-sightedness, or to our interpretation of them, according to stereotyped systems of theology, and not to the Word of God itself.

Even now, if we undertook to frame systems of theology, we should frame them too selfishly; and, perhaps, not without prejudice. They would savour of the school, the sect, the sacrament, the priest, as well as of the Bible. And if this would be the case in the present age of unparalleled advantages and unrestricted enquiry, of unprecedented enlightenment and of general education, need we wonder that all theological systems constructed in ages past, partook of the unhappy characteristics of their times. And that thus they were more than tinged with dogmatism, superstition, savageness, and blood! A *barbarous* age, leaving the Bible, if it had any religion at all, would have a *barbarous* one. Slavish and tyrannical times would have their damning anathemas. And archbishops and bishops, priests and princes, not having the meek and gentle spirit of Christ, have thus even stained the floor of

God's sanctuary with the blood of martyrdom, and filled their creeds with cruel reprobations. O, it is no easy thing at any time, it requires no ordinary amount of moral dignity and perseverance, to launch away from the shores of our own shallowness into the ocean fulness of divine benevolence.

A *stinted* salvation, a *limited* love, a *partial* sympathy, are all foreign to the Bible. Such ideas abound in the contracted and controversial writings of men, but they are further from the revelation of God than ice from the sun. Bring such freezing fetters near the generous light and heat of heaven and momentarily they melt away. There we find the remedy of salvation reaches as far as the disease of sin. The first Adam has not baffled the second. And that as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the obedience of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. There we find the sun of righteousness like the sun in the firmament, was designed to lighten "every man that cometh into the world." There we find "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." There we find that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." There we find "by the grace or

favor of God, he tasted death for every man." And therefore, the gospel was to be proclaimed to *every creature*, and repentance and remission of sins, preached in his name to *all mankind*, because *all* might be saved. These truths are as plain as that two and two make four. They address themselves to the teachableness of a child, to the simplicity of the schoolboy, and to the exigencies of our fallen humanity, whether we find it amid the refinements and elevations of a fascinating philosophy, or far sunk down in the rudeness and wretchedness of barbaric usage.

Yet, and in the very face of this universal love and benevolence so constantly affirmed, the bulk of us have been trained to believe in a divine heart half cold, a divine hand half shut. In a hell larger than heaven, simply because God would have it so. Trained to believe that God only loves *some*, that he has only chosen *some* to salvation, that Christ only died upon the cross for *some*, and that the Holy Spirit is only sovereignly given to *some*. And then, as all theological errors are broached under the pretext of glorifying God, we are gravely told this limited love sets forth the divine sovereignty most gloriously, and proves that God will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy, and compassion upon whom he will have compassion. Now, we grant that God will have mercy upon whom he will

have mercy, but if he say he will have mercy *upon all*, what right has any man to attempt to impose a restriction, or to steal away so much as a single drop from the exuberance of his benevolence? Is it asked where he has said he will have mercy upon all? we reply it is written, God has "concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." And again, "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his iniquities and live." The serpent of sophistry may desire to suck away the life blood of mercy, from these living and saving truths; but they shall continue and prevail in their blessed immortality, when the last viper of error shall have licked the dust and died.

We may be reminded of a few difficult passages in the Epistles of Paul. Indeed, Peter testifies there are some things in them hard to be understood. But these difficult passages occur in controversy, when the apostle anticipates cavillers, or inveighs against scepticism or corruptions. Never when he is simply discoursing upon the love of God, or the grace of Christ, or the salvation of sinners. *Then* he cannot open the gate of heaven too widely. His phraseology cannot be excessive. His aim is to present *every man* perfect in Christ. He speaks of the exceeding riches of grace, of love that passeth knowledge, and of himself as a sample of long

suffering, to all sinners, however vile and daring, who should afterwards believe. And if he venture to cast an eye upon the balances of the Almighty, to glance at the scales of the divine purposes; in a moment he beholds the preponderance of God's worth over man's worthlessness, and affirms, "Where sin hath abounded, grace hath much *more* abounded."

Further on this point, what judicious man would base his creed, or construct his system upon a few difficult passages, when he had innumerable easy ones? Does any man at the seaside, prefer to bathe in those parts of the ocean, where he is most likely to be carried out of his depth and to be drowned? Does any traveller with the darkness of midnight stealing upon him, select the intricate instead of the obvious path? Does any critic fairly judge of a *human* work from one or two equivocal sentences, difficult of apprehension? Then why thus treat the Holy Scriptures? Why frame an exclusive theology from what is hard and abstruse, to the prejudice, or in direct opposition to what is so plain and palpable that he who runs may read?

As in God's earth, some spots are more foggy and others more clear, so in God's word, some passages are difficult and others apparent. Yet the sunlight is given to all, and all have a right to claim it. So Christ the light of life gave himself for all,

and all may look and be saved. Again, some persons live near the ocean, and others far away. Some gaze upon its glories, listen to its music, while others tell us they have never seen it. Still it belongs to *all*, it benefits all. It bears *their* ships upon its bosom, it supplies *their* sky with clouds, and secures to *their* soil its suppleness. So Christ whether heard of or otherwise, is the Lamb of God who has taken away the sin of the world—"he is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." And the doctor of divinity, employing himself in biblical criticisms, is no nearer the Saviour's heart, or more concerned in his merciful mission, than the swarthy babe that hangs upon the breast of its heathen and neglected mother. As Adam is our common father, so Christ the second Adam is our common Saviour. And as he who follows Adam gets into mischief, so he who follows Christ gets into heaven.

The cases of Esau and Jacob, the contrasts drawn between them, and the statements made in Holy Scripture concerning them, have been regarded as the strongholds, the impregnable fortresses of *divine exclusiveness*. From which it has been inferred, that the one was reprobated and the other elected, the one hated and the other loved, before either was born; the one a prodigy of profanity decreed to everlasting damnation, the other a patriarch of piety, specially and sovereignly chosen of God to everlasting

honor and glory. This we deny. We believe that Esau was not worse than Jacob, and that God loved him as well as Jacob, that he had mercy upon both, and blessed them both for time and eternity. *And now to the proof*; consider in the first place

THE SALE OF THE BIRTHRIGHT.

Esau was very faint, hungry even unto death. Jacob made potted meats, and Esau in his emergency asked him to feed him. Mark, it was not sensuality or gluttony in Esau, as some have misrepresented, but positive hunger. Jacob, like some cunning Jew of modern times, took advantage of his painful position. He made him this usurious and unreasonable proposal, "Sell me thy birthright." Esau, being at the last extremity, reasoned thus: "if I keep my birthright, and die of hunger, it will do me no good. I may as well sell and live." Whereupon Jacob urged him again, saying, "Swear to me this day," and he did so, and sold his birthright. He then gave him to eat and afterwards they parted.

Now if you think God had anything to do with this unrighteous transaction, beyond permitting it, (as leaving men free to act, otherwise they would not be responsible beings,) you will allow me to differ. God could not possibly approve it; for it was contrary to his precepts. Esau was bad, but

Jacob was worse. Esau should rather have died than have sold his birthright, but if wrong for Esau to sell, equally wrong for Jacob to buy. Moreover, the temptation came not from Esau but from Jacob. He was the author of the profane suggestion. It was mean of him, it was cruel of him, it was overreaching of him. His brother was hungry unto death, and he ought to have fed him without bargain or charge. His nature was like his name, a supplanter. It was a shameful and grovelling affair, and it does not appear that it was told to their father Isaac, till worse treachery on the part of Jacob *forced* it from the lips of Esau. We admit the sale of the birthright was an act of profanity, still it was under circumstances peculiarly tempting, whereas in the purchase of it, Jacob was deliberate; and personated the tempter, the extortioner, the mean, the cruel, the unbrotherly, the unmanly, and the ungodly.

In the second place, let us mark

THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH JACOB
OBTAINED THE BIRTHRIGHT.

Time passed away, Isaac was nearly blind, he knew not how soon he might die. Therefore he sent for Esau, and told him to go into the field with his bow and his quiver, and to get him some venison, that he might eat and bless him before he

died. In those days they blessed their children on their death-beds, and frequently possessed the spirit of prophecy, so as to unfold to them things to come. Now mark the complication of crimes through which Jacob secured the birthright and blessing. Firstly, here is a wife deceiving her husband because he is blind. Bad enough for wives to deceive their husbands when they can see, but worse when they are blind, because it is doubly base to take advantage of misfortune. Secondly, here is a mother giving lessons to her son in the vilest hypocrisy. Thirdly, here is the son trembling to do as she suggests, lest he should curse himself by such egregious wickedness. Fourthly, here is the mother hardening her son's heart, searing his conscience, outbraving his scruples by taking all the consequences upon herself! She sends him to the *flock* for two kids, that he may get them without delay, she makes savoury meat which she knew her husband liked. She attires him with Esau's best raiment. She covers the smooth of his neck, and of his hands with the skins of the kids, (for Esau was a hairy man and Jacob was a smooth man,) and thus equipped, she bids him go and play the part of the supplanter.

Jacob approached his father. And now came falsehood the first. Who art thou my son, enquired Isaac? "I am Esau thy firstborn!" And then came

falsehood the second. "I have done according as thou badest me." And then came falsehood the third—in answer to the question, "How is it thou hast brought it so quickly my son?" "Because the *Lord* brought it to me." (Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.) And then came falsehood the fourth. "Art thou my very son Esau?" "I am." O, the long suffering of God to allow such a forger of falsehoods to live. Worse than Ananias and Sapphira, who, even under this more merciful dispensation, were seized with death. Jacob had unrighteously bought the birthright, and now he would obtain it at all hazards, and with perfect contempt for honesty and truth. Yea, he scrupled not to take God's name in vain—saying, the Lord his God had brought what he had taken from his father's flocks. Could Esau be worse than this?

Well might he despise Jacob. He charged him with supplanting him *twice*. He says "he took away my birthright, and now he hath taken away my blessing." From which it appears, Esau regarded the original sale an unfair one, because it was forced upon him in a moment of desperation and extremity. And that he also distinguished between the *birthright* and the *blessing*, and by no means understood he parted with the latter when he sold the former. By selling the birthright,

clearly he knew he should sacrifice the *double* portion which fell to the firstborn, but he had no idea of sacrificing or selling whatever blessings might flow from his father's lips when he came to die. Hence he was doubly aggrieved, and the more so when he sought a place of repentance in his father's mind, and the revocation of the blessing given to Jacob, at his father's hand, and found it not though he sought it carefully with tears.

Who does not feel disgusted with the entire conduct of Rebecca and Jacob, on the occasion of obtaining the blessing? Who does not tremble at their deceit, their lies, their recklessness of truth and conscience? Who can be surprised that notwithstanding they secured the blessing, they heaped upon themselves future chastisement and sorrow? While on the contrary, who does not not admire the straightforward style of Esau, his righteous indignation at his brother's injustice, and his plaintive earnestness, that even *one* blessing might be pronounced upon himself. "Hast thou but one blessing my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice and wept." Were these the tears and the pleadings of a reckless rebel?

After this Esau hated Jacob. He resolved upon revenge. He had found him one of the meanest of brothers, and he would return evil for evil. He would have his life. He would kill him at his

father's funeral. All this was very bad. Rebecca heard these deadly resolves of Esau, and felt weary of her life. She told Jacob to hasten to Haran, which he did, and there for years and years, he reaped the fruit of his conduct towards his brother, by being severely and oppressively treated on the part of Laban. Separated from his mother whose favorite he was, she also was punished for her subtlety, and saw him no more. At length he determined to separate from his uncle and to return to his native place. In doing this he had to pass through the possessions of Esau. He sent a message to find favor with him. That message was how rich he had become. He relied upon his wealth to make way for him. He concluded his riches would accomplish his desire, though Solomon had not lived to say "money answereth all things." It was much the same then as now. The shoeless foot was the most likely to be trodden upon, and the purse of gold everywhere a passport. The messengers returned from Esau, and informed Jacob that his brother was coming to meet him with four hundred men.

Jacob's guilt revived. He greatly feared and was sorely distressed. He knew how he had served his brother and what he deserved. Years left his conscience, his plague, upon approaching Esau. He expected savageness, plunder, and bloodshed. And well he might. In his anguish and half-despair, he

humbled himself before God, he confessed his deep unworthiness, he reminded the Almighty of his promises, and prayed that his family and himself might be delivered from the terribleness of Esau. His prayer was heard. He was not dealt with after his sins. The Angel of the Lord appeared unto him and blessed him, and told him his name should no more be called Jacob the supplanter, but Israel the prevailer!

Esau passed by the drove which he met, and which Jacob intended as a splendid present to appease him. Pursuing the even tenor of his way with his four hundred men towards his brother, at length they meet. Jacob bows in the distance seven times. Esau runs to meet him and embraces him. He falls upon his neck and kisses him. Their tears mingle. Tears of love, tears of joy, tears of humiliation. Esau then kindly recognises his wife and children. And afterwards recurs to the *present* which had been sent on before. "What meanest thou by all this drove which I met?" Jacob replies, "these are to find grace in the sight of my lord." And Esau said, "I have enough, my brother, keep that thou hast unto thyself." And it was only when his brother urged him to accept it as a token of their reconciliation, that he consented to receive it.

Generous, tender-hearted, kind forgiving brother, hated of thy God and good for nothing, who can

believe it? Well may we pity the purblind corruptions of Holy Scripture, which have represented thee as worthless, and as under the curse of thy God from thy cradle; yea, before thou wert born! Didst thou not run to meet thy brother, when he feared thou wouldst take away his life? Thy brother who had supplanted thee, who had taken both thy birthright and thy blessing? No cold recognition! Didst thou not fall on his neck and kiss him? Didst thou not mingle tears of love and tenderness? Were not thy kisses as faithful as thy brother's? Was Jacob's heart soft? So was thine. Was *he* willing to be reconciled? So wert thou. Surely as both were born of woman, both were now born of God!

Yea, didst thou not with godlike nobleness, with a gushing generosity go forth to meet him, and journey many miles to see him all the sooner? Right-minded, soft-hearted Esau, thou didst freely forgive thy brother, for taking advantage of thy hunger and buying thy birthright, and also for grossly deceiving thy blind father and getting thy blessing; so for selling thy birthright, that act of profanity, thy God hath forgiven *thee*. For it is written, and they are the words of him who is emphatically "The Truth," "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

How little did thy brother Jacob dream that God had wrought upon thy heart as well as upon his own! That while he had lost his cunning, thou hadst lost thy revenge! How politic to send thee droves of cattle to please thine eyes, lest thou wert angry still. To calm thy spirit and appease thy brow. How little did he think that God had linked thine heart to his, and that thou wert at least as gentle, as fraternal, as himself! Thy love was without bribery or purchase. It despised his gift. Because of the gushings of thy loving and reconciled heart, thou didst not understand the offering. Well might thou say, "Jacob what means it?" And well might he reply, conscious he had done thee wrong, "it is to find grace in thy sight." Then burst forth thy noble spirit of contentment. "I have enough, my brother, I have enough; keep that thou hast unto thyself." Still thou wert not proud, for when he urged thee to accept, as a pledge of thy reconciliation and sincerity, thou didst no longer refuse him.

Nothing can be more far fetched than the idea, that Esau intended by taking four hundred men with him, to destroy his brother and his household. He was a great prince and such a body guard became his station. Moreover, he had a right to suspect the sincerity of Jacob, whom he only knew as 'deceitful and exacting. The sequel proves, however,

that to injure his brother was now furthest from his thoughts. Now they were no more afraid to meet around their aged father's dying bed, or to mingle their regrets at his grave. Anger and envy had long been destroyed. Jacob had abhorred himself for his guile, and Esau had deplored his rash vows and his rage. And thus when Isaac being old and full of days gave up the ghost, his sons Esau and Jacob buried him! Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.

For the profane act of selling his birthright, we excuse not Esau, but surely there was too much of God in him, for him to be destroyed. Nor is it at all clear that, though he sold his extra portion of his father's property, he ever intended to sell his blessing. At all events his guilt was, as we think, far less than Jacob's through the whole transaction. Yet on the contrary supposition, remembering that mercy and salvation respect not *degrees* of wickedness, that they are for the vilest as well as the more virtuous, that they are promised to all that repent and forsake their sins, on what ground can Esau be deemed reprobate? For ourselves we cannot believe he would ever have been the subject of such undeserved and wholesale condemnation, but for the misconstruction of passages of Holy Scripture, in days of darkness and cruelty, which we have yet to explain.

In our opinion, if ever there were a *practical*

penitent on earth, it was Esau. "By their fruits ye shall know them," is the test to which all human character must be submitted. Not the act of a man, but the habit of a man. Hence, not David by his adultery, nor Peter by the fruit of falsehood, nor Moses by the fruit of anger, nor Jacob by the fruit of subtlety; because all these were fruits not habitual, and fruits repented of. Why, therefore, judge of Esau by this solitary act of profanity? An act committed under circumstances most tempting and extreme, and afterwards most bitterly lamented and deplored. For though he found no place of repentance in his father's mind, though his father did not recall the blessing which had been given to Jacob, Esau sought it carefully with tears. The life that is records his penitence, his punishment, his pang; shall not the life to come testify his salvation?

If to be kind and tender hearted, forgiving one another, to put on bowels of mercies towards those who have injured us; if to possess a brotherly love and kindness, which, throwing off all restraint, will fall upon another's neck and kiss him; if to weep over past mistakes and alienations, and to resolve upon future fellowship and wisdom,—if these be the fruits of a heart softened by the dews of heaven, and enlightened by its sunshine, then, unquestionably, they were beautifully brought forth, yea, their manifestation was extraordinary on the part of Esau, and

altogether unexpected by Jacob, because of his self-accusing fears and suspicions on the memorable occasion when he met his brother. Doubtless many a sun might have gone down upon his wrath,—many a time he might have cursed his cunning brother. In this he had sinned. But now he had learned to tame his tongue, to rule his spirit, and was thus mightier than he who taketh a city. Revenge was past. Reconciliation was sweet. His rash vows were forgotten; his murderous intentions abhorred. His father's tomb no spot for strife or fratricide. Kisses of kindness, pledges of love, words of good will, tears of tenderness, years of harmony, were long after reciprocated. And who shall say that brethren who thus mutually kissed and rejoiced together on earth, do not blend in everlasting peace and happiness among the spirits of just men made perfect. At all events, they exemplified the spirit of our Saviour long before he had trodden the earth as the great Teacher of mankind, to inculcate this indisputable test, "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." "He that loveth is born of God; for God is love."

We come now to the enquiry,

HOW COULD THE GOD OF LOVE HATE ESAU?

How can this harmonize with the aphorism, "God is love?" We shall be told by not a few, that

the Bible teaches *both*, and that we must leave the harmony with God. We deny, however, that the Bible teaches *both*. It is contrary to common sense. It is gravely absurd. It is as unreasonable as it would be to affirm that the Scriptures teach light is light in one place and darkness in another. We are the offspring of God. And if he be love—essential love—he can hate no unborn babe, nor decree to hate it when born, because he cannot deny himself. Surely it would be a negation of his holiness, simply as exercising his sovereignty, to hate, blight, or destroy any creature to whom he has given life.

What should we say of a *man* who hated his son *before* he was born? What should we say of a man who hated him *after* he was born. Before he had capabilities for good or evil? What should we say of a man who even hated his child *irrevocably after it had offended*? Has the rightly disposed human breast no room in its affections, no place in its sympathies for the profligate and rebellious? Let the deep groans, the briny tears, the piercing exclamation of a David testify. "O Absalom, my son, my son, would God I had died for thee." Absalom, my child, notwithstanding all thy past treason and sensuality, I love thee still; would God I had died for thee." And could David's heart be more tender than the heart of David's Lord? Let his flowing grief, his furrowed cheeks, his plaintive voice, bear witness.

“O Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathering her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Would that thou hadst known in this thy day the things which make for thy peace, but now are they hid from thine eyes.” Matchless mercy! Not hid from the eyes even of those who had killed the prophets and stoned the servants of the most High, until they had wilfully shut their eyes against every message, every mercy, every miracle, in order that they might not see what they did not wish to see. If you brought a splendid picture for your neighbour to look upon its beauties, and he insulted you by shutting his eyes, would you not take the picture away? So when the Jews shut their eyes and *would not* see God’s Son, he left them in their darkness. The darkness was their own wilful creation. “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

Now, can that which is *monstrous* in man be *perfection* in God? That which is hideous in an earthly parent be admirable and adorable in our heavenly parent? Are not God’s essential morals the morals which he inculcates upon his creatures? Would God say to man “thou shalt do no murder,” and himself decree the everlasting destruction of his own offspring before it had done good or evil? Not for a moment, we readily confess, must we limit God

by man. He doeth as it pleaseth him in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. We tremble at the thought of replying against him, or of bringing him into judgment who made all things out of nothing, and before whom all things are as nothing. But we should rather be dumb, irrevocably and eternally dumb, than so to outrage his revealed perfection, his love, his mercy, his grace, his long suffering, his slowness to anger, as to suppose that he frowned upon his creatures to show his supremacy, and decreed them to suffering and to destruction to tell out his power. On the contrary, all those tendernesses and affections, all those kindly and anxious emotions which we feel as fathers and mothers towards our children, our heavenly Father has himself instilled; and again and again by his own love, compassion, and forgiveness of *us*, he urges our imitation of him in our conduct towards one another. Sometimes, however, condescending to appeal to our sympathies to assure us of his own. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

Again. It is written, "God is no respecter of persons," Not merely that he is no respecter of nations, but also no respecter of persons. In every nation, he that feareth God, let him be who he may, let him have been what he may, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him. But

how could he be no respecter of persons if he loved Jacob and hated Esau before they were born ? How if he chose the one to salvation, and reprobated the other to destruction ; if he would soften the heart of the one by his mercy, and harden the heart of the other by his fury, how could his grace and goodness be equally for all ? We shall be told again, leave this to God to reconcile, for he has said it. We deny that he has said it ; though such torturing constructions have been put upon his word. And so long as the word of God is thus wrested, and errors—gross errors either begotten in the darkness of the middle ages, or stereotyped amid the savageness of times when the so-called religious authorities thought death without all sorts of previous torture too good and too gentle for those who differed from them,—so long, we say, as these obnoxious and putrid antiquities are perpetuated by the press, embodied in human creeds, or dogmatically announced from the pulpit, so long will religion itself unhappily confounded with the cruel and selfish notions of men, be abhorrent to the masses of the people. For in the very nature of things, man cannot love a God who hated him before he was born, nor can he believe *that* religion a mercy which may by any possibility include such a curse. This, however, is not of God, but of men. God is love ; and all these horrid ideas of God, coming from the

devil, fit the selfishness and tyranny of man, find them where you will.

AND NOW TO THE PROOF.

Premising that we will be second to none in reverence and submission to the Divine prerogatives. Yet while God can do everything, we are told he cannot deny himself; and while all things are possible with God, we read it is impossible for him to lie. Therefore, being tender he cannot be tyrannical, being just he cannot be unjust, being merciful he cannot be malicious. Perfect love is essentially without prejudice. The stronghold of those who affirm the contrary is to be found in the words under consideration. "For the children not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

Now, if we take this literally and personally, mark the awful picture it presents. Esau lies upon his mother's lap in infant helplessness. She loves him—God hates him. She feeds his body—God forgets his soul. The baby cries, she hugs him to her breast and stays his tears. She blesses him, but God curses him. His God has decreed him to

deathless agony—a deathless agony he cannot avoid! Now we ask who can believe it? Has he thought amiss? O no, as yet he has not thought at all. Has he spoken amiss? O, no; as yet his lips are strange to syllables. Has he done amiss? No; for as yet he knows not good from evil, nor can he discern between his right hand and his left. Still his dark blue eyes have spoken to his father's heart. He loves him much, and many a prayer has gone to heaven on his behalf. And can it be that any angel could be rash enough or cruel enough to disturb the patriarch in his prayers! To whisper as he supplicated “no use Isaac,” “no use Isaac.” You may pray for Jacob, but not for Esau. He was hated and accursed of thy God before he was born! Is it so? And must a father and a mother grieve their way to their grave because their parental love is baffled by their Maker's changeless hate? Must their spirits writhe in agony that while he gave their child a place in his wide wide world, he could find no room for him in his boundless and eternal heart? The very thought is sickening to the soul, it maddens with the burning caustic of despair, and would leave the sinner sighing for a better God, a nearer God, a God that could love us all.

Fearful damage has been done through our translators having inserted the word “children” in the 9th chapter of Romans and 11th verse, which

is not in the original. It has filled many minds with fatalism, and the dreadful dogma of reprobation. Here, say they, is an incontrovertible case in point ! The children were not yet born, they had neither done good nor evil, but purely that the purpose of God, according to election may stand, the elder is to be hated and the younger to be loved. Paul, however, is quoting from Genesis and from Malachi, and therefore we must refer to what is written in those books in order to get the true meaning of the Apostle. In the 25th chapter of Genesis and 23rd verse it is written, " And the Lord said unto her, two nations (not two children), two *nations* are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thee, and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger." Mark then, that the prediction is concerning *nations* not individuals. Mark again, that it refers to the temporal destinies of nations, and not to the eternal state of souls. Mark further, that not a word was then said about Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated. No such revelation was ever made to Rebecca ! This instead of being in the *first* book of the Old Testament, as it would seem from a superficial reading of the 9th chapter of Romans, is actually in the *last* book of the Old Testament. It is recorded not by Moses, but by Malachi ; and evidently refers not to the two individuals, but to the

two nations of which they were the heads or founders,—the Israelites from Jacob whose name was changed to Israel,—the Edomites from Esau. The nations took their names from them, and consequently are often personated by them. Hence while Esau is mentioned in Malachi, 1st chapter and 3rd verse, in the 4th verse Edom is introduced, showing clearly that the allusion is to the Edomites, and not personally to Esau.

Indeed, if referred to Esau personally it would be untrue, when it is said, "I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste, for the dragons of the wilderness," for Esau lived and died one of the richest men in the east, and it was not until years after his death that the territory of the Edomites became a waste. Again, in all fairness, if wherever we find the word "Esau" we are to take it personally, we must do the same with the word "Jacob." Such usage would make *Jacob* reprobate, for God says by Isaiah, "I gave Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches." And again it is declared, "He burned against Jacob like a flaming fire."

Moreover, the prophecy was not fulfilled in Esau and Jacob personally, that Jacob was stronger than Esau, or that the elder served the younger. Quite the reverse. The account forbids any such conclusion. Jacob, as we have seen, was afraid of Esau. He trembled to meet him. He sent presents to

appease him. He called Esau his lord, and himself Esau's servant, as related in Genesis, 32nd chapter and 10th verse. He bowed to the ground seven times as he approached him. And the riches of Esau were so vast and his dignity so great, his cattle so abundant and his prosperity so extreme, that the land was too straight for him to dwell with his brother. On this account he, as it were, emigrated and dwelt in Mount Seir. Esau, we are told, is Edom. The Edomites were far in advance of the Israelites. They had their dukes and their kings before there was any king in Israel. And though we have no further account of Esau, the founder of that nation, because Scripture history chiefly amplifies concerning those from whom in fleshly succession the Messiah came, and the Messiah sprang not from Esau, but from Jacob, yet we think we have enough to warrant the conclusion that his latter end was better than his beginning, and that his spirit, as that of his brother, now rests with God, expecting the glorious resurrection of the just.

Moreover, if God love all mankind, he also loves the nations into which mankind is divided. He cannot hate or destroy nations till he has borne long with their wickedness. What brought the hatred of the Almighty upon the Edomites was not his sovereignty but their sin. Their wilful disobedience of his commandments. Their unbrotherly conduct

towards the Israelites. God had plainly told the Israelites, "Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother." Would he, therefore, himself abhor an Edomite? Neither were the Edomites to hate the Israelites. But they did so. This is evident from their reply to Moses. Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the King of Edom: Thus saith thy brother Israel (mark how affectionate his language), thus saith thy *brother* Israel; thou knowest all the travel that hath befallen us. How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians vexed us and our fathers. And when we cried unto the Lord he heard our voice and sent an angel and hath brought us forth out of Egypt; and behold we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border. Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields or through the vineyards; neither will we drink of the water of the wells; we will go by the king's highway; we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left till we have passed thy borders." What a reasonable pacific message! And had the generous hearted Esau been alive, we venture to say he would at once have granted their request. Surely the noble manner in which he acceded to Jacob's desire when he left Haran, justifies our conclusion.

But what answer did the *then* King of Edom

return? Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand. Thus Edom refused to give Israel a passage through his border. Wherefore Israel turned away from him. Here then was the ground of grievance. A warlike aggression on the part of Edom against his brother, contrary to the commandment of God, and whereby the indignation of the Almighty was justly provoked. Subsequently came the prophecy of Balaam, "And Edom shall be a possession, and Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies, and Israel shall do valiantly." Thus in the time of David, he put garrisons in Edom, and all they of Edom became David's servants. Then was fulfilled the prediction not of the individuals, but of the nations, "the elder shall serve the younger."

The Edomites hated their brethren, opposed them in every way, rejoiced in any distresses that overtook them, and therefore God hated them. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be meted to you again." Hence the dreadful judgment as foretold by Obadiah. "Shall I not in that day, saith the Lord, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mouth of Esau? And thy mighty men O Teman shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter." But why this universal havoc? For the sake of

the divine sovereignty? No. Because of the original hatred of Esau personally? No. Let God give his own reason. "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the stranger carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates and cast lots upon Jerusalem, *even thou wast* as one of them. Acting not the part of a brother, but of an enemy. But thou shouldst not have looked on the day of thy brother, in the day that he became a stranger: neither shouldst thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction: neither shouldst thou have spoken proudly in the day of their distress. Thou shouldst not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldst not have looked upon their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity. Neither shouldst thou have stood in the crossway to cut off those of his that did escape, neither shouldst thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of his distress. For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen; as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee, thy reward shall return upon thy own head. And the house of Esau shall be for stubble, and there shall not be

any remaining of the house of Esau, for the Lord hath spoken it."

In the book of Jeremiah, we find all these desolations foretold, as though they were about to be heaped upon Esau personally, whereas he had been buried a thousand years. There it is said, "I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will visit him." And again, "I have made Esau bare. I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself, his seed is spoiled, and his brethren and his neighbours, and he is not. All this we need scarcely say, refers not to Esau, nor to his immediate posterity, but to the Edomites in the days of Jeremiah. And so when in Malachi, God says to Israel, "I have loved you saith the Lord. Yet ye say wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord; yet I loved Jacob, and hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness—here he has no allusion whatever to Jacob or Esau *as men*, but to his righteous dealings with the nations. For this was written by Malachi, one hundred and ninety years after Obadiah had foretold it, and during this interim had been fulfilled. Thus, therefore, what was not at all true as regards Esau himself, was actually the fact in reference to the Edomites, hundreds of years after his decease. They were the servants of the Israelites, and at length

their territory became a desert, and themselves nationally extinct. In this way they were punished, after many warnings for all their oppressions, cruelties, robberies, and murders towards their brethren, and for all their idolatrous departures from the true and living God.

Nor should we forget to add that once and again, when the Israelites departed from the Lord and did evil in his sight, he raised up the Edomites to be *their* scourge in return. We find when Joram, the King of Israel, trod in the wicked footsteps of Ahab, whose daughter he had married; Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves. And also when Solomon became an idolator, and corrupted the worship of God, Hadad, an Edomite, who had fled into Egypt in the time of David, and there married the King of Egypt's wife's sister, was permitted to discomfit and trouble Israel all the days of Solomon.

Clearly then, God deals with nations as they deal with him, and with one another. According to his retributive justice, as they sow they reap. Morals bring mercies, as truly as immorals secure miseries. All past nations which have perished, have perished simply because they had filled up the measure of their iniquities, and deserved to perish long before. By their sins they had become suicides. They had destroyed themselves morally, before God destroyed

them nationally. Long suffering waits as in the days of Noah, but not for ever !

We admit, however, there was special forbearance towards the Israelites, at least towards two out of the twelve tribes. Because the sceptre was not to depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh came. Christ after the flesh was to spring from the tribe of Judah, and therefore the Jews were preserved as a nation till he was born. Otherwise their base ingratitude, their constant murmurings, their demoniacal pride, their horrible idolatries, would have made a full end of them centuries before. Well did their pious prophets understand this when they said, "to the Lord our God belong mercies, but to us shame and confusion of face." "It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." "I am God, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed !"

We have thus endeavoured to clear away the cloud cast upon the history and destiny of Esau. To vindicate the character of God against unreasonable and tyrannical imputations, that all men may love him because he loves them. To enforce the fact that "God is love." How far we have succeeded *you* must judge. We *base* our belief upon no man ; neither would we *bind* upon any man our conclusions. We believe and therefore we speak. And we abhor

the thought that God can hate his creatures, and decree them to destruction before they are born. We believe that the Almighty would never have permitted millions upon millions of responsible beings to have come into the world through thousands of years, exposed to any and every evil, unless he had provided commensurate means of mercy and salvation in the mission of the Redeemer.

We tremble at the idea of usurping or infringing any divine prerogative. We are but dust in God's balance. Of yesterday and as nothing in his sight. Still what is revealed we will declare, and that without reserve. That God is willing to save all, to have mercy upon all, to forgive all; yea, that he is not willing any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And therefore if in the end, there be an outcast, he will have shut the door of heaven against himself, by going on still in his trespasses, and by neglecting the great salvation. "For how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation!"

Fathers and mothers, comfort yourselves with the assurance that God loves you and all your children. Your child Esau as well as your child Jacob. He loves your household, for he loves the world. Christ has redeemed us all from the curse, and we have only to look to him and be saved. He will cure us of evil and make us meet for glory. One man may,

in a worldly sense, be better off than another ; one child may have brighter prospects and a larger portion of this world's goods than another : but God can bless poverty as well as wealth, affliction as well as cheerfulness, the peasant as truly as the prince. And as to himself—his wondrous self—he divides not his heart, he measures not his love, he makes no reserve ; but freely gives all he *can* give, and all we can possibly receive, to every one that asks his blessing.

Melancholy enough that men should perish because of their own obstinacy and impenitence. The thought of a sinner lost through his own negligence is sad indeed to a sensitive mind. But the idea of millions of men, women, and children, simply as such, being appointed unto wrath and condemnation which they had no opportunity to escape, is, in our opinion, the very climax of the doctrine of devils, and a down right contradiction of the gospel of reconciliation and eternal life. Nothing is more obvious to the unbiassed reader of Holy Scripture than that the “grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men,” in a greater or less degree, and that upon the use or abuse of such degree depends the final destiny of every creature, be it eternal life or eternal death. “Who-soever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

Precious then as is the diamond, it will not do as

an emblem of God ; for diamonds are scarce, and God is everywhere. The treasures of earth may be scarce and dear, but the treasures of heaven are accessible to all without money and without price. We want, therefore, a nobler emblem of our God. Where is it ? We have it in the universal sun which shines on universal man. Representing the eye of God looking with perfect light upon all his creatures and inscribing with an infinite benevolence, from a radiance unsurpassed and unmistakable, the gracious command, "Look unto me all ye ends of the earth and be ye saved !"

FAITH OR SAFETY.

“Jesus answered them, do ye now believe?”—*St. John xvi.*, 31.

FAITH is among the simplest subjects of Holy Scripture. We often fear to discuss it, lest we should seem rather to complicate or perplex it. For when men are told to believe in order that they may be saved, if it be necessary that they should first hear or understand an elaborate treatise about faith, of human compilation, the simplicity and sufficiency of Holy Scripture are thereby impugned, and the salvation of the sinner is postponed and jeopardised. Rather, we take it, that believing may be compared to breathing. Every man in the world understands what breathing is, though not one man in a thousand can give you a definition of it. And if some lexicographer should come forth and say, “breathing is respiration,” he has only supplied you with a harder word than you had before. Breathing is easy when the body is right; believing is easy when the mind is right. Breathing is impossible to the dead; and believing is impossible to the man

who buries himself alive in the grave of his moral corruptions.

Now, not a few have mystified the subject of faith by speaking of different *sorts* of faith. They have talked of "historical faith," and of "natural faith," and of "spiritual faith." They might as well speak of geological faith, and astronomical faith, and military faith. The fact is, Faith has innumerable subjects for its exercise: but faith as a principle or faculty in the human mind is always one and the same. Believing in the far-down depths of ocean does not constitute it a *marine* faith; believing there is an atmosphere in the moon does not make it an *astronomical* faith; believing the history of Moses does not constitute it a *biographical* faith. We affirm, faith is the same principle or faculty in the human mind whether it go forth on subjects temporal, earthly, scientific, spiritual, or eternal. The faith which we require in the House of God; the faith we should exercise in the reading of Holy Scripture, is just the same faculty of our intelligent minds which we invariably put forth in all the common avocations of life.

For what is faith but *confidence* in the testimony of another? An apostle tells us it "is the substance of things hoped for;" or, as the word is more frequently rendered, the *confidence* of things hoped for—"the evidence," or *conviction*, "of things not

seen." It is a firm persuasion in your mind of any fact that has been revealed to you, and on which you as fully and thoroughly rely as though you had heard it, or seen it, or handled it for yourself. Consequently, when treating on faith, we may seasonably expose the folly of the worldly-wise maxim :

SEEING IS BELIEVING.

Men imagine themselves very sharp and very shrewd, when with a smile or a sneer of self-conceit, they say, "seeing is believing." "We have no idea of your faith," say they, "we know nothing about it : let us see for ourselves ; that is our faith." This, however, is the veriest contradiction, for seeing is *not* believing. It is utterly impossible for a man to be the subject of trust concerning that which he sees with his own eyes. And if faith be the taking of things upon *trust*, then, unquestionably, it must have respect to things which are invisible. He, therefore, who says he will only believe that which he sees, in other words, believes nothing at all. He has no confidence beyond his own physical senses.

Take it in a worldly sense, and the absurdity is obvious. The man has never seen America ; and, therefore, as with him, "seeing is believing," he does not believe there is such a place. A man has never seen his forefathers ; and, therefore, as with him "seeing is believing," he does not believe that he had

any. The worldly-wise maxim "seeing is believing," thus reduces the man who glories in it to a personification of conceit and absurdity. Such was the spirit for a time even of Thomas, one of the twelve. "We have seen the Lord," said the disciples. Thomas answered: "Except I see the print of the nails in his hands, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." You may say you have seen him, and you may say he has risen from the dead, seeing with me is believing; and "except I see I shall not believe!" Eight days after, Jesus came into the midst of them, and Thomas also was present. "Reach forth thy hand," said the Saviour, "and feel for thyself, Thomas. Be no longer faithless, but believing." Thomas immediately replied, "My Lord and my God." "Because," said Christ, "thou hast seen, thou hast believed." As though he should gently chide him; not much credit in that; not much trust, not much faith there, Thomas! Your conviction has been bounded by your vision. You did not believe till you saw. "Blessed are they which have *not seen*, and yet have believed!" Theirs is the true trust, the hearty confidence.

The faith of Noah which is eulogised by the apostle, was a faith, emphatically touching things *not seen*. As yet there was no visible darkness in the heavens; there were no gathering clouds; there were no thunder-tones noising their way through the

atmosphere of earth, when Noah began to prepare the ark for the saving of himself and his house. He was moved with fear because of the unsparing deluge foretold; "things not seen" as yet. All was calm and serene. There was still the cheerfulness of the sunbeam; the elements around him were peaceful. He prosecuted the work of building his ark, and seemed a fanatic to all around; but it was by faith he persevered—believing things not seen as yet. As fully convinced of them as though they had actually transpired. Whereas had he waited to prepare the ark—had he delayed to fulfil the command of God, until he *saw* the judgments, until the heavens had grown black with clouds, and the earth on which he trod had been saturated with waters, his task had not been completed, his procrastination had been his ruin, and he and his household would have been overwhelmed in the universal flood.

We have another case in the conduct of Abraham. He went out, not knowing whither he went. There was the strength of his faith. Believing what he did not know; what he could not see—knowing not whither he was going! The circumstances in which he should be placed when he arrived at his destination; his own future position and that of his progeny; these were the secret things which belonged to God. Yet he went forth as confident that all would be well, as satisfied God's way was perfect,

and that his path was one of safety, as though he had clearly *seen* the inheritance which God had promised to bestow. And of other worthies of whom we read, it is recorded, "They died in faith." They saw the promises *afar off*; they embraced them; they were *persuaded* of them.

It is therefore clear, if we have any real faith, it relates to "things unseen," and completely opposes the delusion that seeing is believing! What a man sees he does not take upon testimony. What a man sees requires no exercise of trust. When, therefore, we speak of faith, the faith whose end is salvation, we understand confidence in the testimony of God and of his Christ; and practical conformity to all the conditions which such testimony includes. Further—

FAITH IS NOT AN IMPOSSIBILITY TO MAN, BUT IT IS
A FACULTY IN DAILY EXERCISE.

What can a man transact in common life without faith? Begin with his childhood. Have children no faith? Have they not faith, trust, confidence, in their parents? Does not a child take his *name* upon faith? And his age upon faith? And his parentage upon faith? Till he can, at all events, reason and argue for himself, does he not believe his parents and confide in their testimony? Is he not applauded for so doing? And are not children in the Scriptures

referred to as being docile, and teachable, and believing, as patterns even for men? How could a child ever learn anything without faith, without confidence, in the testimony of the teacher? You send your child to school: but where is the possibility of education in the absence of faith? He believes the sun is the sun, the moon is the moon. The laws of the planetary system he takes upon faith. He cannot reason them out; he cannot investigate them for himself. He has confidence in your knowledge, and therefore, he receives it. It is to him a matter of faith. Ten thousand facts are matters of faith to the masses, who have neither time nor talent to comprehend them. We find faith also in the traffic of commerce. You receive a letter; you read it; you mark the signature; you have never seen the writer; you have never seen his handwriting; but you believe that the signature is genuine, and that it comes from the party by whom it professes to be sent. You act upon it; you execute the contents of the letter; having thorough confidence that so it is. Or again: You receive a draft upon a banker. You have thorough confidence in him who gives it. You have confidence in the bank upon which it is drawn. What is that but faith? Believing what you cannot see? Confidence in the genuineness and in the worth of the document? Or again: You give a banquet. You invite twenty

persons to share your hospitality and social feeling. You believe they will all be present. You have confidence in their appearance. Within half-an-hour of the time fixed, you *see* none of them ; you prepare for them all ; you believe there will be no vacant places if there be life and health. What is this but confidence in the promises of your fellow-creatures ? The *conviction* of things not seen ?

Or again : You have a physical malady : you repair to a physician. Is not that faith ? You have confidence in his skill. He writes a prescription : you have confidence in its accuracy, though perhaps you cannot read it yourself. It is taken to the chemist. You have faith in him that he has accurately prepared it. All this proves, I say, that faith is not *impossible* to man, but that it is a faculty in daily exercise. And you will find, in passing through life, that as you need daily breath, and daily bread, so you require daily faith. It would be utterly impossible for the world to proceed during the existence of intelligent beings, such as men, women, and children, were there no such faculty divinely implanted in the human mind. For, if all men will *see* all they believe, if they will take nothing upon trust, all the business of life is at once suspended, foreign correspondence is annihilated, and man pent up to the few inches of material space which his body necessarily occupies.

Our reason for making these observations, is just to insist that if a man have not faith in God, the fault is his own and not his Maker's. If a man have not faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, he must perish; but if he have not faith, the fault is with himself. If you can believe your neighbour; if you can believe your brother; if you can believe the testimony of your child; how is it that you believe not God,—the record he has given of his Son? How is it that you believe not the sayings and the doings of the Saviour himself? If faith were difficult, if it were impossible, why then happiness and salvation would be beyond our reach, and the world must needs perish. But, with the promise "Whosoever believeth shall be saved," can we look up to heaven and say, we *cannot* believe? Can we look up to heaven and say, what a difficult, yea, what an impossible task is set us? God says "ye shall be saved if ye believe;" but if we are commanded to do what we *cannot*, why then, we must lie down at the foot of the cross and shed tears of despair. We must admit the blessedness of heaven, and yet confess it is so high, and the terms upon which it is to be obtained are so impossible to us, that we never, never can possess it. Not so. What God requires us to do in order to be saved, we can do. What God commands all men to do everywhere, all men everywhere can do—not in their own strength

—not in their own wisdom—not as doing it from their own resources—but as giving themselves up to the study of his Word, that satisfied of its rightfulness and its reasonableness, they may receive it with meekness and gratitude, and so lay hold of the precious promises it contains. Divine light is always at hand for the teachable.

Did you ever find it difficult to believe your father, your mother, when they told you the things which happened long before you were born? When they pointed out the house in which you were born, did you ever doubt it? You had confidence in their testimony. Man is not a doubting creature until he is deceived. Man, as an intelligent being, necessarily has the faculty of faith. Then why not faith in God? He that cometh unto God must believe that he is. This is the foundation of all religion; and there can be no more important question than that which we have selected: “Do ye now believe?” He that cometh unto God must believe that he is. You cannot see him. “No man hath seen God at any time.” And when “the fool says in his heart there is no God,” to be consistent with himself, he should say: “there is no Asia, there is no Africa, there is no America; I have never seen them.” “No man hath seen God at any time.” “He dwelleth in light which no man can approach”—but what then? We see God in all his works. Every star is my witness

God is. The moon as she walks the midnight sky testifies God is. The sun which gilds the universe by day proclaims God is. Why, if there be no God, no Creator of all things, then all things made themselves! And then you turn everything into a God and make all Deity! Thus to say there is no God is in reality to deify everything. By faith, however, we understand the worlds were framed. We cannot understand it any other way than by simply believing what God says. We were not by the Almighty when he said "Be light!" and there was light; when he spake and it was done, when he commanded and it stood fast. We can only believe that he made all things out of nothing, as having confidence in his testimony. He tells us that he made all things out of nothing, and that he made all things which do appear, in six distinct periods of time, classified in the Scriptures as so many days. Now all this is a revelation to our faith. That is, we cannot *see* that God made the universe, we take him at his word. If a man tells you he has built a ship, though you cannot see it, you believe him, unless you have reason to doubt his veracity; unless he is given to falsehood, and you cannot rely upon what he says. You take a watch in your hand. Who is the maker? You see the name inside. Do you doubt it? Then why do we doubt that God made all things out of nothing? Why do we doubt that Being who testifies

all things were made by him? Why need we see him? Truth fits the conscience, as the bullet the mould in which it is cast, and, therefore, we have only to hear the words: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth," in order to receive them. Their rejection involves a guilty effort!

Moreover, God has been pleased to make himself known in the Scriptures as "the God of Salvation." This is the greatest comfort—the only sufficient comfort—which a man can have in a world so full of uncertainties and sorrows, of diseases and of death. If God were not "the God of Salvation," where would be our comfort? Tell me he is a God of power; tell me he is a God of wisdom; tell me he is a God of holiness; I bow; I adore—but I tremble. I am a sinner. Tell me he is "the God of salvation," "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;" "that he has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live;" tell me he is a God pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin—for such he proclaimed himself from the beginning to his servant Moses—then and then only have we confidence in God's character as bearing upon our bliss, notwithstanding our sinfulness. He has made the world—that teaches us his power. It also teaches the fulness of his wisdom. He has

made all things so beautifully. His working is "excellent." Creation teems with exquisite adaptations proclaiming the perfection of divine knowledge. But we must come to the Book of God to learn his will to man, to sinful man. And we find the Bible teems with God's compassion, with God's condescension; with God's patience; with God's long-suffering. Attributes which we should never conjecture; glories we should never guess. The idea of God being "patient!" Who could believe it unless it were written? God being "patient," we say! God patiently "waiting to be gracious!" Who could believe it? God blotting out sins, so that they shall never come into his remembrance again! God healing our backslidings! Here is the comfort of the Bible. It tells out the grace and mercy of our God, that God loves man, and so loves the world of mankind, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should never perish, but have everlasting life!

Thus all who lived and died in faith before Christ came, had Christ as the object of their faith, because God revealed him "in the ages past." He declared he would send his Son "in the fulness of time," and that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." Thus Christ was the sum and substance of the Old Testament Scriptures. Of him the prophets gave witness, that "whosoever believeth

in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." They lived in the faith, and they died in the faith, confident God would fulfil his word. "The child" was not "born," "the son" was not "given." Isaiah sang the song of prophecy: "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The very spot was mapped out—Bethlehem. The circumstances of his incarnation were distinctly foretold; nevertheless the time was not yet! They saw the promises *afar off*. They were persuaded of them; they embraced them. They lived as confident Christ would come to bless the nations, and they died as convinced of his future appearance, as though all like good old Simeon, had been privileged to hold the infant Saviour in their arms and say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Their eyes did not see the infant Saviour, nevertheless the eye of their faith pierced through the intervening clouds, and realized the unspeakable gift of their Father God, as tabernacling among men.

Subsequently, Christ stands upon the earth himself, and says: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "He that cometh unto me shall never hunger, he that believeth on me shall never thirst." Naturally we ask, by what authority he says these things? The heavens open;

an audible voice is heard; it sounds unmistakably upon the ears of listening men: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, *hear ye him.*" All round the banks of Jordan, at the period of our Saviour's baptism, these heavenly accents were distinctly heard—the voice from the Excellent—proclaiming him the Messiah. Together with the exhortation—yea! the command—" *hear ye him!*" When he was transfigured on Mount Tabor, there was a recurrence of the same phenomenon. God spoke with an audible voice from heaven, that there might be no mistake as to the Saviour of the world: " *This is my Son, hear ye him!*" And if this were not enough, then said Jesus, "Let me do such works as man never did, in order that you may believe in me. Let me work miracles; and, because of the works, believe! If my words are not enough, if my pretensions seem somewhat severe, if my assertions are without parallel and of a startling kind, let the palsied man recover the vigor of his limbs, and as he takes up his bed and walks, know that the Son of Man while on earth hath power to forgive sins. Bring me the dumb and I will loose his tongue. Show me the blind, and I will pour the light of day upon his sightless eye. Let me face the leper, and he shall be clean at my word every whit." And by all these things, Jesus proved that he had deserved the confidence of all men before

his time, and the faith and homage of all men to the end of the world.

To speak more plainly was impossible, "This is the will of my Father who hath sent me, that every one who seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." The Scriptures are full of God's testimony to man that he is the God of grace, of mercy, and of salvation. They teem with the sayings and doings of Jesus Christ, who declared himself the light and the life of the world, and who has promised that if we will come to him he will in no wise cast us out. Yea he teaches that his flesh is meat indeed, that his blood is drink indeed; that he has given himself as the life of the world, dying the just for the unjust to bring us to God.

What therefore hinders—what *hinders*—that we should not believe this record? Can any intelligent man give a reason why he should doubt God's word? He never doubts the words of his fellows. He questions not what his neighbour says, unless he has reason. And shall God's testimony to man, shall Christ's sayings and doings while on earth, be doubted and denied? Is man to be thus wise in his own conceit, against all that is reasonable? What are the evidences that Christ gives that he speaks the truth? Nothing less than countless miracles. Do you think these are forgeries? Do

you think such forgeries would be attempted now? And if attempted now, could they impose upon the faith of mankind? Have we not even in our own time heard of men pretending to work miracles? Did the public believe it? Now all the miracles that Jesus did, many of which have been recorded, were attested and proved and acknowledged in his own day, and mankind have had faith in those miracles during long centuries. Even his enemies, seeing his miracles, said, "If we let him alone, all men will believe on him." If they had been the mere romancings of a wicked imagination, their cradle had been their grave. If we discard the history of the Holy Scriptures, we must give up all history together. We may as well burn all our literature, and say: "It is not." Inconsistency we could not believe; we want confidence in him who asserts, and we want consistency in the testimony. What is there in the Scriptures inconsistent? What are the doctrines which our Saviour teaches? What are the precepts which he enjoins? What is the goodness which he would have us cultivate and exemplify? And against what sins does he not inveigh? The Book proclaims its own divinity. If it only contained the three words, "Love your enemies," these would be a fair presumption that the Bible came from heaven. No man ever dreamed of that. Our selfishness sneers at it. Revenge refuses

it. Philosophy never attained such a climax of godliness as to teach its sublimity. And though the Saviour has left it on record, how utterly impossible it is for men to carry it out in the midst of their imperfections and their disagreements, unless they are filled with the Spirit. Depend upon it, no book as a bundle of imposition—the product of deceit and wickedness and treachery—would originate and enforce a sentiment so divine or a precept so pure as, “Love your enemies!”

Give us this sentence, and this sentence alone will satisfy us that the Bible is the breath of God. And if we find a readiness (as we do) to read our daily journals and believe them, and believe what happens in this part of the world and that part of the world, though, as we have said before, we are physically pent up in a few inches of matter, how much more reason have we to believe and lay to heart the Bible, as the testimony of God to man; a testimony full of his grace, and his mercy, and his willingness to save? A testimony in which Jesus Christ is clearly included as the way, the truth, the light and life of the world; that coming unto him we may never hunger, and believing on him we may never thirst. A testimony, making known to us that God sent him to be the propitiation or covering of the sins of the whole world, the Lamb of God bearing them away in his own body on the

tree. Do ye, then, now believe? Do ye believe God loves you? Do you believe God is willing to save you? "That if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin?" That "if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness?"

Now, where is the unreasonableness of this testimony? This is God's way of saving sinners. The first Adam was *disobedient* unto death; the second Adam was *obedient* unto death, even the death of the cross. As by the sin of the first Adam all curses came upon us, so by the second Adam all mercies are superinduced. Thus, while "the wages of sin is death," and we all deserve to die, the gift of God is eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe there is room in heaven for every sinner. God says so. We believe Christ atoned for every sinner. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." We feel sure all who come to Christ shall be received; and being received, they shall be for ever blessed. This is faith,—confidence that God would not deceive us, confidence in the character of Christ that he would bring truth only into our world. And just as when a man tells anything reasonable, we believe it, we have confidence in it; so, when God tells us that which is reasonable,

why should we not believe him? Though God may tell us much that is mysterious, he never tells us anything that is unreasonable, he never tells us anything that is inconsistent. He may tell us what is hard to be understood, but when he comes down to practical matters, God speaks with all the simplicity of a child. He adopts phraseology calculated to impress the mind of man with sterling truth. And thus when he would tell out his fierce anger against the wicked, he calls himself a "man of war," as we read in one of the prophets, "The Lord (Jehovah) is a man of war." Condescending to use our own words; telling us in our own little language, the greatness and terribleness of the Almighty.

All, however, that we have hitherto remarked only implies a dead faith, and a dead faith leaves us to perish. For it is possible to believe God is a God of grace, mercy and peace; possible to believe Christ came into the world to save sinners; possible to believe that God's way of saving sinners is through the atoning sacrifice of his Son, and yet to have no life in us. Therefore, the faith required in Holy Scripture, whose end is salvation, is not merely confidence in God's testimony that it is true, but practical *conformity* to God's requirements. Thus, God "commandeth all men everywhere to repent." "With the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness;

and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Now, there are many things, matters of fact in common life, that never concern a man's heart, but only the intellect. When, however, we come to the Bible, then the heart is immediately implicated, because it deals with the heart, and the conscience, and the everlasting destiny of man. And if, thus, the Bible comes to tell me God loves me, ought not that fact to engage my heart? If the Bible assures me Christ laid down his life for me, and is able and willing to save me, ought not that truth to secure my affection and obedience? Is he to love me, to die for me, and am I to have no love for him? For me, he fulfilled the law; for me he removed the curse; for me he conquered sin and Satan; for me he opened the gates of everlasting life. Then my heart must be fixed on my Saviour, or my faith is dead. Mere intellect will save no man. The devil is intelligent. Fallen angels have no lack of intellect. They believe, but they obey not.

UNDERSTANDING WILL NEVER SAVE MEN UNLESS
THERE BE A PRACTICAL CONFORMING TO IT.

A man may understand fire burns, and yet be burnt to death unless he be careful. A man may know the effect of ardent spirits upon his physical frame, he may feel the fire burning in his bosom,

and the intoxicating cup bewildering his brain. The knowledge that such things are pernicious, a clear understanding as to their nature and tendencies, may yet leave the man an inebriate. But when he lays it to heart, when he brings his will in subjection to his understanding, then he is safe! To analyse the poison and know what it is, is one thing. To put it away, is another thing. You may analyse it, and understand it; drink it, and *die*. But if, having analysed it and understanding it, seeing its pernicious character, you cast it away, you *live*! So when we speak of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the safety is in acting out what we believe. If we believe that Christ is right, we must go in Christ's way. If we believe that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of the world, we must say with Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." If we understand "His flesh is meat indeed," we must eat that meat. If we believe "His blood is drink indeed," we must drink it. If we understand he is God's foundation, we must build upon it. Thus, the faith of the gospel is not without works. It is not reposing in the mere intellect or understanding which is common to mankind, but it demands the conforming of the whole man to the Lord Jesus Christ. Then he thinks as his Saviour thought; speaks as his Saviour would have him speak; and walks, in Scripture phrase, "even as he also walked." Hence,

we read of faith purifying a man's heart; of faith overcoming the world; that is when the heart is enlisted as well as the head, when our inmost affections are gained as well as our understandings. Then we overcome the world, then the heart is purified, then we pass from death to life, then we really receive and inwardly digest the truth. It becomes a living law within us; old things have passed away, and all things have become new. We have not simply heard the tidings that Jesus Christ came to save sinners, and that all men coming shall be saved, but we have actually gone to Christ ourselves. We have gone to him believing in his wisdom, and he has taught us. We have gone to him for righteousness, and he has clothed us with the garments of salvation. We have gone to him for cleansing, and he has given us that ablution of spirit and conscience which enables us to rejoice and have confidence before God. We have hungered, and he has fed us with the bread of which if a man eat he shall not die but live for ever. We have thirsted, and he has given us to drink of the water of life. And thus we believe, not simply in the wisdom of religion, but we believe and act under the influence of the truth. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." We know the worth of the physician, because he has healed us; we know the skill of the physician, because

he has opened our blind eyes, and unstopped our deaf ears, because he has found the antidote against all our maladies, and because, under all circumstances of demerit and helplessness, when we have looked unto him he has strengthened and supplied us.

The great impediment therefore to the success of the gospel, is that men do not like the requirements of faith. It is not that men cannot believe, but that men do not like to believe. Paul says of the Romans, they did not *like* to retain God in their knowledge. Men do not like to believe what is not congenial with their preferences. Yet men readily believe what they wish. Thus it is easy for a man to believe or to conclude without thought, there shall be no judgment; easy for a man to believe that God takes no notice of him. "How can ye believe," said Christ, "which receive honor one of another, and not the honor that cometh from God only." As long as a man is under the influence of prejudice, as long as he is under the influence of sin, as long as he is under the influence of the world, he cannot believe. The world fills his mind. He never thinks; he never reads the Bible. How can he believe a book if he never reads it? How then can he believe the *Bible* if he never consults it? If you have not read the Bible, how can you believe it? You do not believe it. It is a mere nod of blind assent.

Believe a book whose pages you have never pondered! Absurd! We charge you to believe nothing without evidence. If you have not read your Bible, do not profess to believe it till you have. If men are so taken up with the things of this world that they have no time to read Christ's testimony, how can they be said to believe it? How can they be more than christians in name? But who can fairly say they have no time? How they will answer this at the bar of God we know not. God's word ought to take the *first* place; and all your commercial letters ought to be second to the testimony that comes from heaven. What God says to man, shall man say he has no time to attend to? And that the affairs of this world are so absorbing that he cannot give the next world attention? All such the Great Teacher reproves, saying, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." "Be not deceived, God is not mocked." He who puts away the Bible puts away the Saviour, for the Bible is full of Christ. He who puts away the Bible puts away God, for it is God who speaks. He who puts away the Bible turns a deaf ear to the common salvation which is therein revealed.

**MANY CANNOT BELIEVE BECAUSE THEY ARE THE
SLAVES OF SIN.**

A man living in sin does not want to read the Bible. Every page condemns him. A man pleased with himself, full of himself, self-righteous, wise in his own conceit, is the Bible for him? He will not be saved in God's way, and he cannot be justified in his own. Christ told the Jews this. They were bigoted and prejudiced, and they sought to be justified by their obedience to the law, and therefore Christ says, "How can you believe?" You must be divested of all your prejudices, and you must come simply saying, "What is truth?" And there must be confidence that what God says is truth, and a willingness to conform to all God imposes, and then salvation is certain. So when God says, "Come this way," he appeals at once to your judgment. You know what God says is best. When God says "Why will ye die?" he appeals to your judgment, for surely life is better than death. But inclination says, "a little more of the world, a little more of the flesh, a little more of the devil," and therefore "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

In conclusion, we press the question, "Do ye now believe?" Do you believe that Christ is the

Saviour of all who seek him? Do ye believe that looking unto Jesus in life and in death you shall be for ever blessed? Do you believe that as sure as you leave this world, if you believe, you shall be in the presence of Christ as he said to the forgiven malefactor, "this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise?" Do you rely upon his word—"I will raise him up at the last day?" And do you believe that your body shall bear the image of the heavenly, even as it now bears the impress of earth? For our part we have as much belief in the resurrection, as though we were all risen from the dead. We have as much confidence in God's testimony, and in Christ's testimony, as though all things had been fulfilled. We as thoroughly believe in the coming judgment as though the day were past. And we as firmly believe in the blessedness of the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, as though we were there. Yea, more, we know that whoever is not there, upon him will be the blame of having put away everlasting life. Upon him will be the blame of having neglected the great and common salvation. But we trust our readers can say, "*we do* believe; we have believed for years; we know whom we believe; we have not followed cunningly devised fables; we have looked to Jesus and we have found comfort in times of tribulation, support and preserving grace in the midst of affliction and

temptation." In darkness he has been our light, and as we thought, even on the brink of the grave we have had the hope of a blessed immortality, so that death and gain have been associated.

STRONG FAITH GIVES STRONG CONSOLATION.

It did so in the days of Abraham ; it did so in the days of Moses ; it was the case with David when his soul was among lions ; he says, " my heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed ; I will sing and give praise." And so strong a faith was the faith of the patriarch Job, that he could affirm, " Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him ;" I will not let go my hope in his testimony though he blight me from head to foot ; though he slay me yet will I trust in him. Such faith indeed is precious—more precious than the gold that perisheth. Truly Peter says, it is far more precious than gold, and prays that " the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory." What can gold do when a man comes to die ? Gold can do nothing, but faith secures everything. What can gold do for a man amid the troubles that waste his frame this side the grave ? It often wets his eyes with briny tears, but faith enables the eye clearly to see through the dimness of the tear, and sends a cordial to the inmost heart

when all without is dark and sad. For "faith can remove mountains!" Aye! the mountains of guilt are moved into the sea of Christ's blood and there buried; and so buried as to be seen no more. This is faith then, faith that enables a man to glory in tribulation; also to endure, as seeing that which is invisible, to lay hold of heaven as though we already possessed it. For faith is the confidence of things hoped for, and the firm conviction of things not seen.

IF THIS BE OUR FAITH, WE ARE SAVED FOR EVER.

If we believe in Jesus Christ we are saved, whate'er betide us in this world. If we cling to Christ we are saved. Faith is only another word for safety. "He that believeth shall not make haste;" he is not in a hurry; he is not on a slippery road; he is not passing over a ricketty bridge. "He that believeth shall not make haste." He can take all things easily and calmly, temperately and amiably. He can let his "moderation be known unto all men" at all times because the Lord is at hand! He is safe whether in sickness or health, prosperity or adversity; safe to a good old age; tottering on the verge of the tomb, sure of a blessed immortality. He shall come up in the image of the heavenly, radiant with everlasting glory, an heir of God through Jesus Christ for ever! How precious

then is faith ! and all true faith is simply taking God at his word, and doing what HE bids us ! This is the way to heaven. "Hear ye him," says God, concerning the Son. "Hear ye him." Well then, let us listen. What does he say ? "Follow me !" And what then ? "Ye shall find treasure in heaven." Believe in me and ye shall never perish, but have everlasting life. Come to me and I will give you rest. Therefore, all is well if we believe in Jesus Christ. We must have confidence in what he says, and prove that we have confidence in what he says by conforming ourselves to him. In this case we shall not rest in a dead faith ; but we shall add to our faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness, and charity, and all these graces, being in us and abounding in us, we shall not be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Saviour Jesus Christ. How important, therefore, the enquiry, are we following ? Are we conforming ? If we have *only* faith, can it save ? No ; dead faith can save no man. If a man say he has faith and has not works, can faith save him ? No. The devils believe and *tremble*. There must be the will as well as the understanding ; there must be the heart as well as the brain. We must *do* what we *know*, and God will enable us if we ask.

Finally ; let us lay the stress upon the word "*now*." Do ye *now* believe ? "Bye and bye" is

a great ruiner of souls. That procrastinating word in our language is most fatal to numbers. "Bye and bye" they will repent; "bye and bye" they shall read the Bible; "bye and bye" they will believe. This will not do. "*Now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation." If you have not read your Bible to-day—do you expect to read it to-morrow? Do you think you shall be in a better mood then than now? Why? Does man get better and better by going on worse and worse? If you have neglected the Bible to-day, the probability is you will neglect it to-morrow; and as to promising yourself that "in future" you will consult its pages! In the future do you say? The future! Why, the sun of to-morrow may rise only on your cold clay. It may shine on your shroud. "*Now*" belongs to us; "*then*" belongs to God. "Do you *now* believe?" Do you believe God loves you? And do you love him? Do you believe that Christ came to save you? And do you say "Lord save me or I perish?" Do you believe in the heaven which the Scriptures reveal, and see the only way to it is confidence in Christ and conformity to him? When you come to die—Ah! *then*, perhaps, you will send for a minister. A minister is of importance *then*. Why not *now*? Religion looks like truth *then*. Why not *now*? Sin is felt a burden *then*. Why not *now*? The sinner calls himself a fool *then*.

HOPE OR SUNSHINE.

“For we are saved by hope.”—*Romans* viii., 24.

DOUBTLESS you have all sensibly experienced the vast difference between a sunny and a foggy morning. When you have risen from your nightly pillow, and beheld the sun shining in his strength and splendour, diffusing his sheeny rays all around, and causing universal nature to smile amid the grandeur of his gorgeous beams, have you not felt an irrepressible emotion of joy within your heart; have you not almost involuntarily said—“verily light is sweet?” There have come such a bliss and such a buoyancy about your entire self, that your back has felt broader for the bearing of its burdens, and your heart lighter amid the pressure of its woes. So, on the other hand, when going forth to the business and bustle of another day, fog thick enough to be felt has begloomed your atmosphere, and not a cheerful ray has struggled through your sullen sky; what shadows of depression have been cast over your very mercies,

and how soon even the rills of solicitude have been swollen into seas of sorrow.

Is man thus moved by the weather? Is man thus affected by the fickle elements of nature? Shall fog induce melancholy, and sunshine ensure satisfaction? Even so. And will any one say such things ought not to be; that man ought not by such trifles to be moved? We answer, there is a sense in which he *should*—to show that he is a sensitive being. For God has made man sensitive, that cloud and crystal, light and darkness, calm and tempest, beauty and barrenness, should not be all one and the same to him.

If, then, in natural things, there is the foggy and also the sunny side, not less so in the divine revelation before us; and if these discrepancies in the field of nature influence our physical frame, and we feel them in our eyes, our ears, the beating of our pulses, the heaving of our lungs, how much more should those contraries contained in divine revelation,—the sunny on the one hand, the gloomy on the other,—call forth our most serious consideration and awake our deepest anxiety. There is a foggy side—the side where there is no hope; and there is the sunny side, where lives and breathes the good hope through grace even unto life eternal. Let us, therefore, consider this vast distinction as it is found throughout the pages of the Word of God.

THE FOGGY SIDE.

Over this broods "the blackness of darkness." It is a soil ever strange to sunshine; where the plantain of hope refuses to take root; where all happiness is either evanescent or imaginary; where pleasures seem to sparkle in the distance, but like the dewdrops their lustre is lost, and they all melt away in the touch. True, God is there—for God is everywhere. But God is there rather as a God who hideth, than as a God who showeth himself. Neither can he remove such darkness, desolation, and despair, from the wicked and rebellious, any more than he can communicate death and destruction to the righteous. Material laws may change. Water may change into wine at the bidding of its Maker. The heavens and the earth, notwithstanding all their vastness, may pass away. But morals never change. Right never can become wrong; truth never can become error; justice never can be unjust: and thus the Word of God, which is based in the perfection of his own character, endureth for ever.

Now, this foggy side owes all its melancholy forebodings to the disobedience and rebellion of man. Were these to cease, the fog would immediately disappear and there would be universal sunshine. True, we see the workers of iniquity flourishing; we behold there the wicked springing as the grass, and

all looks fair and green and healthy to our vision ; but such flourishing is only the forerunner of remediless ruin. "A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth the fool understand this," saith the psalmist. "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be *destroyed for ever*." True, on this foggy side you behold the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like the green bay tree ; but in the suddenness of a moment he passes away. Lo ! he is not. You search for him but you cannot find him. True, even the heart of the profane and the daring may beat with hope, but it is the hope of the hypocrite—the hope of the self-deceived, which ultimately must perish. We admit that upon this foggy side we behold clouds which promise much, but they contain no water ; trees, but they bear no fruit ; waves pleasant to the sight, but they foam out only their own shame ; stars—sparkling stars—yet wandering stars, disowning their allegiance to the source of light, and therefore unto them is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. In spite of the fog we see beauty, but it is blighted ; symmetry, but it is sin-stained ; gold and genius there, and plenty of them both, but both are godless. In a word, the dismal shades of death and destruction overspread the entire scene ; and the reason may be rendered in the words of the

apostle—"Having no *hope*, and without God in the world."

Nevertheless, from this foggy side there is a way of escape. Just as your lungs were not framed for fogs, neither were your spirits created for sorrows. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all; and therefore, coming unto God, you come to the light—and the light you get! Yea, you shall get more than sunshine, for revelation tells of a "heavenly city, which needeth neither the sun nor the moon to shine in it, because the Lord God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Come then, away from the fogs of earth to the felicities of heaven; seek the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near; submit yourselves unto God; cease to do evil—learn to do well; and soon you shall see the thunderbolts of his divine indignation melt into loving-kindness and tender mercy; the gentle zephyr shall take the place of the howling hurricane; and instead of midday gloom and midnight darkness, the skies above shall pour down salvation and the wide earth shall smile with the foretastes of heaven! We may turn therefore to

THE SUNNY SIDE.

God is "the God of hope." The apostle Paul prays that "the God of hope may fill us with joy



and peace, in believing, that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." The Almighty has opened a door of hope in this prison of guilt and gloom. Angels have already come from the skies and sung, "On earth peace, goodwill towards men." Yea, God himself has bowed his heavens and become incarnate, and dwelling among us, has left these nervous words: "I am come a light in the world, that whosoever believeth on me shall not abide in darkness." Thus are we "saved by hope."

THE HOPE OF THE CHRISTIAN ALWAYS RESPECTS
THAT WHICH IS GOOD.

It may be asked, "Does not the hope of the wicked respect that which is good?" We reply, there are cases in which the hope of the wicked does not respect that which is good. A wicked man always wishes what he calls good for himself, but he does not always wish good for others. Here is the sublimity of true religion and of christian hope. No man wishes himself adversity, but he may wish it for another. No man desires to be accursed, but he may wish another every evil. No man looks out for misfortune for himself, but he may plunge another into its perilous vortex. O, the sublimity of that religion which makes us hope the best for the worst man in the world, and for the worst enemy we ever

had, however he may have injured us! Not satisfied to lift ourselves up with exultation in the day of his fall or calamity, however he may have distressed us; or, however unnatural and unworthy he may have proved himself. Still to sympathise with the tender-heartedness of David, when, over the lifeless body of his son, he lifted his eyes heavenward, streaming with tears, and said,—“O Absalom! O Absalom! my son, my son, would God I had died for thee!” Surely then, it is not too much to say that the christian always in his hopes respects that which is good. In common with the world he does; but besides this, in the sense to which we have referred. No man hopes for sickness, but for health. No man hopes for death, but for life. And if death itself come, no man hopes for a violent, but for an easy death. No man hopes for failure, but for success in his commercial pursuits. No man hopes for misery, but for happiness and concord in his family circle. All men hope for good for themselves—even the worst of men. Ay! and the thief hopes he shall never be detected; and the murderer hopes the verdict will not go against him. This shows how God has lodged in our common heart a buoyant hope—a buoyant hope that inspires us, even to the last degree, to desire that all may be well with us.

Hence, we perceive, it is opposed to fear. We fear evil while we hope for good. If a fever comes

into your house, you fear the contagion of it. You fear calamity. If the house be on fire, you fear it may be burnt down. Fears have respect to troubles, to calamities, to things we would rather avoid; hopes to those things which bless us here, and which may make us happy for ever. Nevertheless, our nature is so frail and so fallen, that all hope and no fear would not do. There was fear in the heart of Noah as well as love when he built the ark. You read that he was moved with fear because of things not seen as yet, and therefore, at the bidding of God, he prepared an ark for the saving of himself and his house. A little fear is very useful. It is a safety valve; it is a daily restraint upon the turbulency of human passion and the waywardness of the human mind. Nevertheless, excessive fear makes a man tremble, unfits him for duty, convulses his whole frame, and may even tempt him to suicide!

How delightful to stand, though a sinner, upon God's earth, and to feel we hope for nothing but good to ourselves, our families, our neighbours, our friends, our enemies, and the whole world about us! This is to be in sympathy with the mind of God. For, again we affirm, as truly as he framed not human lungs for fogs, neither created he human spirits for sorrows.

THE HOPE OF A CHRISTIAN RESPECTS THAT WHICH
IS FUTURE.

“We are saved by hope.” And immediately it is added, “but hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for.” As we have shewn in a former lecture, seeing is not believing. Man cannot believe or trust for that which he already has and sees. Hope is a kindred grace; and an apostle says, “that which is seen is not hope.” What a man sees, what he handles, what commends itself already to his senses, what he at present enjoys, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Here again we observe a vast discrepancy between the good man and the godless man. The godless man is all for the present: the good man is all for the future. Not, however, to the neglect of the present. The man of the world is all for to-day, for his “threescore years and ten:” for the wants of a crumbling mortality—the man of God looks out for ever and for ever. And, well indeed, may our hope have respect to the future, when we call to remembrance the many comforting promises in relation thereto, given us by “God who cannot lie.” For, to hope in the future for that which is *un-revealed*, to hope for that which is merely the imagination of our own brain, is only to prepare for

ourselves future disappointment and anguish. But as God is faithful to his word, we may repose in his promises, which we are assured are "yea and amen in Christ Jesus." Therefore, the future fills our hope, and our hope looks into the future, dwells upon its vastness without dismay, and without repining at the trials of the present.

For aught we know, there may be hope in heaven. We may be sure there will be faith in heaven. We shall always have to trust God. Not faith in the sense in which it is exercised now; nor will our hope be exercised as now; but, how do we know that God will not give us another revelation and another roll of promises? He may enter more fully into the *details* of our "for ever and ever." Already we are told of everlasting life, but not in what we shall be engaged. The full description is not given, and were it, we could not realise it while pent up in flesh and blood. Nevertheless, God will be the object of our confidence from age to age, for we shall never see God but through "the man Christ Jesus." And if he should reveal to us things to be accomplished or enjoyed, onward and onward, in the ages to come, we shall still have hope in the future through the precious promises of God. Promises ever fulfilling, and yet to be fulfilled. Suffice it to say it is written, "if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men the most miserable;" if our hope

relate not to the future, if it carry us not into eternity itself, then are we of all men the most miserable.

THE HOPE OF THE CHRISTIAN RESPECTS THAT
WHICH IS POSSIBLE.

Worldly men hope for the impossible ; they often hope without any foundation for what they wish, and what they desire. There is nothing more extravagant than the hope of the unrighteous man. "His expectation," we are told, "will be cut off." He finds it so in worldly things. His hopes rather deserve the name of dreams or delusions, for there is no foundation on which they can safely rest. But the man of God, in the exercise of christian hope, only expects that which is *possible*. All things, saith he, are possible with that God with whom we have to do. His love is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him. Who shall limit the power of that voice which spake and it was done, which commanded and it stood fast? 'Entrenching himself in the natural perfections and moral attributes of his Maker, in the exercise of his hope, he finds all things to be possible, however sublime, magnificent, or mysterious. To him they may be incomprehensible, but it is God who has said it. God who is faithful to his "word which endureth for ever" has spoken, and that is enough.

He dwells, therefore, upon facts, as though they were already fulfilled, and enjoys by faith the sunshine which shall hereafter most clearly and perfectly break forth, satisfying for ever the exigencies of benighted and yet hopeful man, as making him radiant with eternal gladness and glory.

THE HOPE OF THE CHRISTIAN HOWEVER TRIED
SHALL BE TRIUMPHANT.

Faith is tried. Patience is tried. Love is tried. Every grace is tried in this world of trials. Christ was tried—emphatically “the tempted man,” and “the man of sorrows.” “The tried stone.” We must expect our hope to be tried and tested again and again. We know that David alternated between hope and fear. Looking towards the foggy side, he well nigh fainted, saying—“I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.” And then, again, looking on the sunny side, he charges his spirit—“Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God! Why art thou cast down within me, and why art thou disquieted within me, O my soul? Hope thou in God!” So, also, Abraham, against hope believed in hope, and became “the father of many nations.” And as we read in the epistle to the Romans, “we glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and

experience, hope." Now, how does experience minister hope? Why, the man who has experienced six trials and deliverance out of them, hopes for deliverance out of the seventh. The man who has had support during all his past duties and difficulties, has his hope brightened and his faith strengthened in relation to what is to come. And thus there is a sense in which experience augments our hope, and causes us to be strong in hope even beneath the blackness of the cloud and the darkness of divine providence, giving glory to God.

"Hope maketh not ashamed," says the apostle. It shall never put the christian to shame. The man of the world is ashamed because of the failure of his hopes. He may hope for wealth and die poor; he may hope for worldly homage and may die despised. He may hope for influence in the administration of earthly affairs and never attain it; he may hope for what he would pronounce the climax of prosperity, and, if permitted to reach it, it may prove to him the deepest vortex of despondency and wretchedness he ever knew. But the christian's hope is moderated and measured by the divine promises, which never can fail. And, as the Word of God is ever sure, and the promises of God are always sweet and sufficient, so the hope of the believer in these shall bring him to a glorious end. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.

For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

It must not, however, be supposed that hope in the future at all forbids present and actual enjoyment. The believer already enjoys the forgiveness of sin and special relationship to God. "*Now* are we the sons of God," saith John. And again, "I write unto you because your sins *are* forgiven." So also David: "blessed is the man whose transgression *is* forgiven, whose sin *is* covered." Thus he is no more the doubting criminal, but the forgiven child. Already God dwells in him and he in God. His title deeds to his inheritance are with him, and as he journeys to take possession of it, many of its precious fruits are sent to refresh him on the way. Hence he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Having thus considered to what the hope of the christian hath respect, we may briefly touch upon the blessings it includes.

THE CHRISTIAN HOPES FOR THE SUPPLY OF ALL
HIS NEEDS EVEN UNTO DEATH.

We who are on this sunny side, may hope for all we shall need to-morrow; for all we shall require through every stage of life we have to pass, every

station in life we have to fill, every duty we may be called to discharge, even to the verge of the grave, when our heart and flesh shall fail. We have a well founded hope that our God will supply all our needs. If we be christians, if we be "followers of God as dear children," if we be believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, no good shall be withheld. Want you guidance? The meek will he teach his way; the meek will he guide in judgment; "I will teach thee in the way thou shouldst go." Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. In all your ways acknowledging him, he will direct your steps, so that none of them shall slide. Want you strength and fortitude in seasons of trial and temptation, that you may not be subject to your adversary the devil, or may not be swallowed up of overmuch sorrow? "My grace is sufficient for thee," saith the Saviour, "my strength is made perfect in weakness." And even before he had trodden the earth to deal out such precious truth from heaven, the promises of God had fallen from the lips of his prophets: "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." "I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord of Hosts." What care we then, to use the apostle's

language, "for tribulation, distress, persecution, sword, nakedness, famine, or peril?" In all these things we are not the vanquished, but the victors: we are more than conquerors through him that loved us, for "I am persuaded," he adds, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

See then, the sunshine in which you live and move and have your spiritual being! You may have to say with David, "my house is not so with God as I could desire." You may have to sigh, Alas! this crook in my lot or that burden on my back. Nevertheless, all believers exercising faith and hope dwell in sunshine, and have a right to expect all good from God; yea, for the life that is as well as for the life to come." "I have been young and now am old," said David, "yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." And the promise is—if ye seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all minor things shall be added unto you. Do we want patience in tribulation, we shall have it. Do we want submission and resignation when many things may seem against us, they shall be vouchsafed. "As thy day, so shall be thy strength." Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and

thou shalt glorify me in the furnace, saith the Lord. Want we ballast because of prosperity? Want we some counterbalance because all is agreeable to the appetites and preferences of flesh and blood? The Lord will provide enough of the bitter to preserve us from idolizing the sweet; and teach us to put away our confidence from all created streams, trusting only in himself "the fountain of living waters." But though the christian *hopes* to the grave, the grave is not the horizon of the believer. He looks beyond it. Therefore it may be further observed that

THE CHRISTIAN HOPES IN DEATH FOR A GLORIOUS
RESURRECTION.

The wicked man when he comes to die comes to the end of all his hopes; but it is then that the hope of the believer is in most vigorous exercise. "The righteous hath hope in his death." The dying believer hopes in God; he hopes in the glorious resurrection revealed in the Scripture. As he bears the image of the earthly, he counts upon bearing the image of the heavenly. He is not dismissed to the sepulchre in ignorance, nor thither does he go to moulder in despair. He is safe in seeming ruins. His life is poured out into the dust to be gathered up again in glorious perpetuity. Death shall be swallowed up in victory; the grave no more shall

triumph; the upright shall have dominion in the morning.

Believers, call ye not this the sunny side, though men and women and children are dying around you, and you yourselves must shortly die? What! is there a promise to gild the grave? Is there a sunbeam to cheer the sepulchre? Even so. Christ hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Therefore, we are instructed, if we lose our friends, if they die away from us, however much we miss them—not to sorrow as those concerning whom we have no hope, for them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. No place more melancholy than where mankind,—amiable, tender-hearted man, has to lie down and die, and leave behind all who are near and dear to him by the affinities of nature; but even that dreary spot is not one of unmixed desolation and woe, for hope lives and moves within his chilling breast; a heavenly fire keeps his heart warm amid the icy undoings of dissolution, and he feels within him, as believing and hoping in God, a “peace which passeth all understanding.” A blessing which the world can neither give nor take away. Reckoning upon his uprising he has nothing to fear, for we add further—

THE CHRISTIAN HOPES NOTWITHSTANDING THE
FINAL JUDGMENT FOR ETERNAL LIFE.

It is no light thing to be judged. When we judge ourselves we tremble. When we think of our cold-heartedness towards Christ who gave his life a ransom for us : when we think how seldom we look to him and pray to him—and ask for blessings in his name—though he said “whatsoever ye ask in my name, believing, you shall receive;” when we consider as his followers how *far off* we follow him, until at last our very graces seem rather to be counterfeits than genuine imitations, we may well tremble. Compared with Christ’s patience, ours seems impatience; compared with his holiness ours seems *unholiness*; compared with his charity, ours seems uncharitableness. And if indeed we cannot bear our own eyes thus turned within, without trembling, because of our weakness and wickedness, the deceitfulness and treachery of the human heart, and its proneness to wander from God, in whom are all our springs, what shall we say to the searchings of the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, when he shall come to judge the quick and the dead? Can good hopes *then* inspire our hearts? Can good hopes *then* stay our tears, prevent our groanings, light up our countenances with rapturous smiles, and bring forth the joyful recognition from our lips,

“This is our God! We have waited for him. We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation?” Even so; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. When we shall be judged, our bodies and spirits will be fashioned like unto the glorified humanity of our divine Redeemer. We shall be pure as he is pure, when we shall see him as he is. On the right hand of the Judge, as believers and followers of Christ, we shall not be found, as now, with our defects, or our failings, with our humiliation bodies of sin and of death; but rather, without “spot or wrinkle, or any such thing,”—we shall be found bearing the image of the heavenly. No more corruptible, but inheriting incorruption; no more mortal, but possessing immortality! Then, as Christ looks upon us, he will say—“Come ye blessed!” ye are like unto me. I have finished my work; I have thoroughly conformed you to myself. Come ye blessed of my Father, let me present you faultless before his presence with exceeding joy. Enter ye into the joy of your Lord! Be ye for ever blessed!

The most solemn prospect presented to us in the Scriptures, is that of appearing around the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be bad! And, were it not for the strong consolation contained in the precious promises of Holy Writ, on which God has caused us to hope,

we might well desire there should be no resurrection at all. Fearing that to face the Judge of mankind would be only to meet the Great Destroyer of our souls, against whom we have sinned, with high and with outstretched hand. But, we are told, he who sits on the throne makes all things new, and he will have made us new and have perfected that which concerns us all as his followers, before he shall pronounce, on the one hand, the benediction,—“Come ye blessed ! ye blessed come ! Or, to the wicked, on the other hand, the fearful malediction,—“Depart ye cursed !” We look, therefore, as christians, for that blessed *hope*, the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ, in whom alone is life eternal.

Eternal life ! Is not this heavenly sunshine in which to breathe ? We are told that our days are threescore years and ten ; if they extend to fourscore years, our strength is labour and sorrow ; for it is soon cut off and we fly away ! That we must go the way of all flesh : that our flesh must see corruption. Yet, beyond all this is a life lasting as the life of him who is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever !” Just as Christ shall not die twice ; neither shall any who believe in him. On them the second death shall have no power. “The gift of God is *eternal life*, through our Lord Jesus Christ !” The second death is God’s wrath and curse upon all who

have not obeyed the gospel, but it can never seize the soul, which by hope as an anchor, is linked so fast to the bosom of Christ, that no storm nor tempest can possibly dissever or destroy it.

To conclude, therefore, if these are the things for which we may fairly hope, as believing the Scriptures and obeying their requisitions ; if every one believing in Christ and following after Christ, may hope for the supply of all his needs to the end of life ; if even when he comes to die he may hope for a glorious resurrection ; if in the prospect of judgment, he may also hope for acquittal, and be assured of a blessed immortality, identifying all his interests for ever with the Saviour who has redeemed mankind, we may boldly enquire whether the language of St. Paul is not justified : “ we are saved by hope ? ”

Saved by hope ! Saved from despondency in the midst of our tears, saved from melancholy though we often groan, saved from murmurings despite the weight of our burdens—“ for our light afflictions are not worthy to be compared with the eternal weight of glory which shall be revealed in us.” “ We faint not at these tribulations,” says the apostle, “ for we walk not by sight but by faith. The things which are seen are temporal, the things which are not seen are eternal.” Saved by hope ! As when some faithful friend who has never failed us, anticipating all our possible requirements, has pledged his word for every

CHARITY OR STRENGTH.

“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”—*St. John xii., 34, 35.*

THE novelty of this commandment, “a *new* commandment I give unto you,” must be considered not as referring to its character, but rather to its degree. For it was no new thing for men to be commanded to love one another. This was contained in the law and the prophets long before Jesus Christ came in the flesh : “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength ; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” But that men should be told to love one another even AS CHRIST HAD LOVED THEM—this was indeed a new thing under the sun. Involving a love which should welcome reproach and self-denial to the last extremity ; and including even a willingness to endure death, if needs be, in its most terrible and ignominious forms. Alas ! how the selfishness of our nature shudders and shrinks from

a test so sublime—for even, sometimes, the most trivial sacrifices for one another, we are unwilling to make. May the Lord of all our hearts conform us to his own heart, that we may learn to love one another with pure hearts fervently.

The words which we have under consideration, might be thus paraphrased. As though the Saviour should say: “I have loved you—see, therefore, that you love one another. I have not confined my energies, my sympathies, my fellowship to the rich and the noble, but I have condescended to men of low estate: see that ye do it also. I have not merely wrought mighty works to cause the world to stare and to wonder, but I have performed things which would be denominated mean and servile—for I have taken the basin and the towel, and I have washed my disciples’ feet: see that ye do it also. I have looked the abandoned sinner in the face, not with heavy unforgiving brow, but with words of mercy flowing from my lips:—‘Go and sin no more:’ see ye do it also. I have wept over the misfortunes of others; I have made their griefs my own; I have sobbed over their sepulchres with tears of sympathy: see ye do it also. I have been a living and a dying sacrifice, not less for the welfare of mankind than for the glory of my Father, whose will I have come into the world to do: see, therefore, ye do it likewise.” O, when—when shall our nature be so wrought up to

the sublime and the godlike, that our Saviour's words, "it is more blessed to give than to receive," shall not be a farce over which the world shall laugh, but a felt fact exemplified by the christian church?

What a lack of love there is yet in the world! How common among us is uncharitableness! How easy to put the worst construction upon things to the disadvantage of another! How self-satisfied and conceited were the Jews of old in their ignorance when they said: "Can any good come out of Nazareth!" Nevertheless, the chief good—the only antidote against all evil—came from thence. How these despising and disparaging tendencies have obtained among those who "profess and call themselves Christians!" And how freely they have been indulged by Catholics and Protestants, by Episcopalians and Dissenters, even to persecution, imprisonment and death! Ecclesiastical history is about as foul and as full of scandals as Satan could desire it to be. It teems with his own examples, his own trophies; and most painfully demonstrates to what a small extent the noble sentiments of Holy Scripture and the loving religion of our Lord Jesus Christ have been understood or exemplified by the christian church through all periods of time.

Hence, many have become sceptics; they have given up all idea of religion in any way. They have looked for it in the bosom of the church in vain—

in scriptural purity and charity—and, therefore, they have hastily concluded there was no such thing under heaven. But, we ask, does a man despise a sovereign because he has seen a counterfeit? Does a man deny realities of which he has unmistakable evidence, because he has previously fallen among many shams? Understand, therefore, that the Bible is sound though the church should be rotten. The Bible is truth though the church be in error. The Bible teems with kindness, tenderness, forgiveness, forbearance, and all that is lovely, even though the church should be a magazine of inflammable materials, an emporium of envy, wrath, malice, uncharitableness, confusion, and every evil work. If then, we want to understand what real religion is—how we should think, and how we should speak, and how we should act under all circumstances, and at all times, we must take no saints, no sects, as our model. Not even the churches, which were founded by the apostles; for those churches were all corrupted while the apostles were yet alive, and over such corruptions the apostles had to weep. Rather, we must carefully and prayerfully study the sayings and doings of the Saviour himself, as revealed to us in Holy Scripture. That going and doing likewise, we may not fail of eternal life—for here we have a pattern without a flaw, a sample without a slur, the moral image of the invisible God!

We heartily wish that the church was the *fac-simile*—the exact representation—of Jesus Christ! It ought to be. It is not. Why not? The great barrier is our self-satisfaction; all sects and parties being self-satisfied—as though they had already attained. So that progress is denounced as change, and improvement is caricatured as fickleness and instability. While “advancement” is the watchword in every other direction, stagnation appears to be the fashionable orthodoxy in regard to religion. Thus schisms and sects, and strifes continue among us, and the bulk of the rancour and the rubbish which the Reformation necessarily left behind it centuries ago, few comparatively, have subsequently cared to sweep away. We know that truth is truth. What was truth in the days of the apostles must be truth now. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. For truth is God’s breath, and as God is the same, therefore truth is unvarying. But human interpretation of truth, and modes of worship are different matters. And, if we say that men in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were as clear-headed and had all the advantages which we possess in the nineteenth century, it is only to affirm in other words, that two or three centuries of unparalleled civil and religious liberty, altogether unknown in the previous history of our world, have been utterly wasted. It is to

throw us back to the gloom of superstition and semi-barbarism, as though that were the age, and those the elements for the special illumination of the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, truth is truth, in theological science, as well as in every other science. And though the systems of Aristotle and of Ptolemy have given place to the Galilean and the Newtonian, yet what really was truth in the times of the one, was equally truth in the times of the other. Time only confirms and exhibits what is truth, while it withers and decays what is error; unless we are resolved to pet, and to patronize, and to idolize it at all hazard, simply because of its antiquity.

While, however, truth is unvarying, we would that all men should consider what is truth for themselves,—not going back to antiquated prejudices, to times of darkness and of bigotry, and adopting them as perfect models for the present day. Unquestionably, we affirm, the times of the Reformation were uncharitable times; they were bigoted times; they were benighted times; they were bloody times. Must they not have been benighted times, when even a Luther, defending the glorious doctrine of justification by grace, was nevertheless a believer in the dogma of transubstantiation—supposing that the bread and wine were actually transmuted into the body and blood of Jesus Christ? Were they not uncharitable and bigoted times, when we find

even a Calvin burning a Servetus? Have they not been regarded too much as model times, and have we not perpetuated the selfish, the severe, the dogmatical, and the anathematising? Are not these evils still with us?

The fact is we have not charity enough to love the whole church: and, therefore, we have not strength enough to convert the whole world. For charity is strength, and discord is weakness. How refreshing when the din of strife is hushed; when the jargon of the schools dies away, when the clamour of sect and party is no more heard; when all listen at the feet of Jesus, and hear this lucid language from his lips: "As I have loved you, ye also love one another—for by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another!"

LOVE IS A DEBT, NOT A CHARITY.

We use the word "charity," as commonly employed in our times, though erroneously. "Charity" is used to signify something which a man may dispense or which he may *not* dispense; something over which he has a discretionary power. We commonly understand it as what a man out of the exuberance of his benevolence may put forth, or what he may restrain. But when we look into the Scriptures we find this is not its meaning. There love is charity, and charity is love; and both are debts—debts ever

paying and debts never paid. For this reason, that at every fresh period of our existence we open a fresh account. Each returning day, creates a new debt of love and charity one to another. Therefore, while we continue to be, we must never cease to reciprocate love and charity. "Love," is the simplest and the amplest word in all language; it is an ocean-word, if we may use the term—made up of drops of kindness, tenderness, compassion, long suffering, sympathy and all possible excellency. It is a word written in our very hearts, as with our very life-blood. If it be not there it can be nowhere else! It is the foundation of all acceptable actions—for without love, what is commonly called "charity" is indeed cutting cold. This love, we affirm, is a *debt*. Let us see that we pay it. Let us not fail to claim it. Who loves me not robs me of my due. And just as it is written that thieves cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, so elsewhere it is added—neither he that loveth not his brother.

The elaborateness of human law is a standing manifestation of the folly of worldly wisdom, while the simplicity of divine law is the proof of its divinity. Thus, there has been one indispensable and general principle, embodying all religion at all times, under all dispensations. Through all ages, from the beginning of human beings, and from the first constitution of human society. This shall abide for ever

and ever. That principle, we need scarcely say, is love. Love God ; love self ; love neighbour—and what other debt have you to pay, what other duty to perform ? All divine law is thus epitomised : love God ; love self ; love neighbour. Now, who will talk of the difficulty of understanding real religion ? Who will say “ we cannot tell who is right and who is wrong ; all kinds of faith cannot be true ; there is such a vast diversity of opinions among those who profess to be the saints, that we are at a loss to discover the truth ? ” Let all such know we sum up that religion that can gladden a man’s heart and sanctify a man’s mode of life ; that can make him happy and honest to his grave and glorious beyond it ; let them know that we concentrate all religion, its doctrines, its duties, its present and its future, its *now* and its *ever*, in the monosyllable “ love.” Love God ; love self ; love neighbour ! Give me this, and you turn earth into heaven. Give me this, and you have swept away the chief ingredients of the curse that make so heavy the human brow, and which so surely blight the human heart. Give me this, and all is right towards heaven and earth. I can *no more*. I would *no less*.

LOVE IS A DEBT WE OWE TO GOD.

This love must have reference to Christ. You cannot love God away from Christ. God claims that

we love him. It is not a "charity," in the common acceptation of the term ; but it is a debt—a debt to God that we should love him. Some man may say : "cannot I love God without Christ, without evangelical religion ?" We answer, no. "Cannot I love him as the God who made me ? Cannot I delight in him in nature ? As having designed and conferred all my physical aptitudes and appetites, and all my mental powers and gratifications ? Can I not love him in the varieties of creation ; enjoy him in sunshine and in shower ; in dry land and in ocean ; in the trees of the field and in the birds of the air ? Can I not see him and love him in all his works ? And as I eat my daily bread, can I not be grateful and acknowledge his goodness with a loving heart, in preparing the precious fruits of the earth ?" Not so. We can only love God in relation to Jesus Christ. For this reason. God will accept no thanks from you out of Christ. The offering is an insult. "No man cometh unto the Father," said Jesus, "but by me." "I am the way, the truth, and the life." If you attempt therefore to go to God by the stars of the sky, by the billows of ocean, by the waving crops at harvest time, by all the magnificent unfoldings of God's natural perfections, you become wise above what is written, and thus you perish in your folly. When God says, "come this way—this is the only way ; and you venture to go other-

wise, you break his commandment and despise his word. You slight his government: therefore, how do you prove your love?

When we look into the Scriptures, we find the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ seems to absorb, or at least to precede, every other consideration. We have not a record of God's love to us in the atmosphere; we have not a record of God's love to us in all the forms and varieties of nature—but it comes with a thundering emphasis: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." "Herein is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "God commendeth his love towards us in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" As much as to say,—all other exhibitions of the divine Being, drop into insignificance and nothingness compared with this. So you can never thoroughly love God, until you thoroughly see his heart and his nature: and you never thoroughly behold God's heart and God's nature, until you behold "the man Christ Jesus;" and behold him the living and the dying sacrifice. God will not be worshipped in any other way. For this reason. Our very breath and

being we owe to Jesus Christ. We shall be indebted to the Saviour for the next upgrowing harvest. The pillars of the earth remain firm only through the mediation of Christ. What! Think you God would bear with this world, so rebellious against his laws, so full of hatred and blasphemy, so multiplying its transgressions, century after century, but for the intercession of Christ? Hence the long suffering of the Lord is salvation, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. However much, therefore, we may admire God, in the luminaries of the heavens, or the luxuries of earth, we affirm that all would fall into confusion and tumble into nothingness, but for the merit and love of the Almighty Saviour. Hence the reason why all who would seek the Father must seek the Son; why all who would worship their Father in heaven, must go pleading Christ as their very life, and give thanks to God for his love to them through his mediation. For God was *in Christ*, reconciling the world to himself, and thus apart from Christ we have no right to live.

We cannot *half* love God for our daily bread; for in that we only see him feeding us for threescore years and ten. But when the bread of life drops into our hearts through faith in Christ, then we see God's love to us for ever and for ever; then we see that he has not merely cared for us during our fleeting

passage to the tomb, but that he has thought of our felicity beyond its dreariness, and secured to us a blessed immortality in the heavenly Jerusalem. And thus when he says, "my son, give me thy heart," constrained by the ever flowing tide of his own goodness and mercy, we are borne along its fulness in cheerful obedience and love.

LOVE IS A DEBT WE OWE TO OURSELVES.

Love thyself. And how can a man thoroughly love himself away from Christ? We know the common maxim is, "every man for himself." Some of those maxims are the wisest in the world. We wish that all men would carry out the saying upon which they seem to rely, and of which they so frequently boast: "Every man for himself!" So says the Bible: "Every man for himself." Without selfishness, let every man take care of himself. This is religion. But no man can thoroughly take care of himself until he has reference to Christ. Men can take care of their bodies,—very few, however, do this,—but we know of no self-control, or self-discipline away from Christ. Where else did man ever learn it? Did you ever learn it at school? Did you ever learn it from any system of philosophy? Did you learn it from the bitter experience of others? Where did you ever thoroughly learn self-culture, self-control, self-discipline, but in connection with the cross of

our Lord Jesus Christ? Men think they love their bodies—yet they give way to excesses and shorten their lives, entailing a thousand sicknesses, enervations and diseases on their mortal frames. They talk of caring for themselves, meanwhile they are slow suicides! For it is not in God's way, and, therefore, it is the wrong way. It is the mere gratification of human passion, rather than obedience to divine principle. Hence, in the fulness of their sufficiency, they are found in straits.

Again: What mistaken views men must form of themselves apart from the Saviour. When we see men carried to the grave one after another, we say, "What is man? All is vanity. As it is with them, so it will be with us." But when we consider our Lord Jesus Christ—his history, his words, his past works, and his future agency, we then find man is worth something; we find he is more than an insect; we find Christ has redeemed him. God has set a value upon man. His spirit is redeemed from the curse of the law by the mediation of Christ, and his body shall be emancipated from the bondage of the grave, when Jesus, "the resurrection and the life," shall appear. Now mark the *moral* of this; we reason does God love us, and has he redeemed our souls so that they may be none the worse for sin, but absolutely delivered from every evil in the ages to come? Does he so love us that he will not

destroy our souls, but conform them in all things to Christ? Does he put that worth upon our bodies that he will actually raise them from the humiliation of corruption, and constitute them sublime and glorious fabrics? Is this the workmanship of God? Is this the design of the Almighty through the mission of Christ? We learn, then, to love ourselves as we never could before. We say: "If God sets a store on our souls, we will set a store on them ourselves. If God cares for our body so that it shall be no crumbling wreck hereafter, we will love and cherish it ourselves. If he will save us, we will do ourselves no harm. Has he loved me so as to give me all things through Jesus Christ, I will so love myself as to receive them thankfully and penitently. Shall I not feel grateful that I am destined to be *something* in the ages to come? That I am more than the vapours which float about me; that I am more than the waves of the ocean which flow by day and by night; yea, that I may be an everlasting monument of love and of mercy; that through me God may shew forth the exceeding riches of his grace in ages to come? Am I thus precious to God, shall I not value myself? This is the practical effect of contemplating self in connexion with Christ. Take that man, on the other hand, who values not the Saviour; look at him far away from Christ—and does he love *himself*? Does he lay that emphasis

upon present being and upon everlasting life which he ought? No, never; he who knows not and loves not our Lord Jesus Christ, cannot half love himself; and though he says, every man for himself, he is on the high road to ruin!

LOVE IS A DEBT THAT WE OWE OUR NEIGHBOUR.

And how can this duty be performed? How can you love your neighbours away from Christ? You may think you love them, because you have uttered benign sentiments, and filled their ears with good words and salutary benedictions. There is much of this loving in word and in tongue. But when we come to Christ, we learn its mere formality, and wherein real affection consists. When we see what Christ has done and suffered, and he tells us to do and suffer also. When we see that no amount of self-sacrifice was too great for our Saviour, in order to improve, and comfort, and save his neighbour, then we begin to understand what true love is. Feeling ashamed lest our eyes should only sparkle with affection, when his were oft streaming with tears. Lest while his cheeks were deep furrowed with grief, ours should exhibit no traces of solicitude. When we see him going to the slaughter with lamb-like disposition—when we behold him the seeming prey of his enemies, hanging helplessly as it were upon the cross, his life-blood ebbing out drop by

drop as he endures all the lingering agonies of a cruel crucifixion—when, in the midst of such torture of body and travail of soul, we hear the voice of supplication, piercing the heavens : “ Father ! forgive them, for they know not what they do,”—then, and then *only*, do we thoroughly learn how to love our neighbour ; to “ bless them that curse us, and to pray for them which despitefully use us.”

Ransack the pages of ancient and modern philosophy ; look through all literature from its commencement until now ; and where—away from the Scriptures, away from the cross—can we thoroughly understand what is love to our neighbour ? Where, away from the perfect example of our Lord Jesus Christ, do we find it practically enforced ? We could not dream it. If we look at the brightest saint, he is not always bright ; if we look at the best of men, they are not good enough to be our model. There may be much that is excellent and much that is sterling ; but “ there is no man that liveth and sinneth not.” To say they are too good to err is to border upon idolatry. If, therefore, we want sublime morals under all circumstances ; a heart full of love and ever gushing with christian generosity towards others, we must take no lower standard than Jesus of Nazareth, who “ went about doing good ;” who freely and willingly took upon himself the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man ; who was obedient

unto death, even the death of the cross, and who is now rewarded as King of kings and Lord of lords, that every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Thus it is obvious that Jesus Christ is the very centre of all that is lovely and loving in the world; and that every sinner must needs come to Christ, and copy Christ, in order to transform earth into heaven, and to secure the moral consummation of the Saviour's mission: "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men."

And if, indeed, all true religion involves this principle of love—if this love be a debt which we owe to God, to Christ, to ourselves, and to our neighbours—how vastly important, how obviously imperative, that it be practical and habitual among all Christians! Let us lay to heart, therefore, that

LOVE IS A DEBT WE OWE SPECIALLY TO ALL
CHRISTIANS.

If we are bound to love our enemy—if it be a debt I owe my enemy, not merely as an act of "charity," but if it be a positive debt, an actual obligation, that I should love my enemy; if I am also bound to love my neighbour, irrespective of his character, mark you, not with the love of complacency, but with the love of benevolence; and if my neighbour is man everywhere to the world's end, since "God hath made of

one blood all nations under heaven,"—if we are thus to love the barbarous, the uncivilized, the idolatrous; if we are to love them all with benevolence, and wish them well, and desire the cessation of all their sins and all their wrongs, that they may participate with us in all the evangelical privileges which Jesus Christ came to reveal and to establish—if thus we are bound to love every man in the world, then, indeed, of what paramount importance is it, and how severely indispensable that there be *practical* and *habitual* love among all christians! Christ loves all christians specially—because not only benevolently as other men, but complacently. Christ sees his image, in a measure, in every christian, therefore he specially loves the *church*. He loves it with a love of complacency, because it is getting like him. It is growing up into him in all things. It is gradually conforming to his loveliness and perfection. This can only be the case as we *practically* love one another! We mean not that love which the world *cannot* see. We do not mean that love which people call "spiritual," and which is never visible. Jesus Christ came into the world to show that his love was more than "spiritual." He would show it was *practical*. Therefore he came down to earth. He has taught us that our love is not to be in word and in tongue merely, but in the hidden recesses of the human heart. That so it may come forth in deed and in

truth. Just as he loved us, is the test given in the text. Love one another *as I have loved you*. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." As though he should say, when you all love one another, the world will know you all belong to me. Not when you admit this particular doctrine, or when you are of such a denomination, or have such and such views of any ordinance. No ; but by this love shall all men know that ye are my disciples. This will be the surest and safest test.

You doubtless have remarked, when Jesus saw Peter after the resurrection, he did not say: "Peter, what *think* ye of me? Whom *think* ye that I am?" But rather: "Simon, son of Jonas, *lovest* thou me? Peter! I do not ask your creed, I ask the state of your heart. You have denied me—you have professed to know nothing about me. I therefore do not say whom say ye that I am? Or, what is your belief, Peter? But I come to the root of the matter, to the one word which includes all religion, for this life and the life to come. Simon, son of Jonas, *lovest* thou me?" "Yea, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." This was enough. Not enough to believe that he was the Christ, the Son of God,—that may be a *dead* faith; but when we love, our faith is alive, our obedience is manifest, and our works prove that we have not

received the grace of God in vain. Thus, the apostle John declares, "we know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." There is the test. "We love the brethren." This is a proof that "we have passed from death unto life;" that we have the loving, generous, sympathising spirit of our Lord and Master; that we love all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and in truth. St. Paul thus understood it, plainly telling the Corinthians that without charity or love, there is no religion. Let a man speak how fluently or eloquently he may, let him command extraordinary influence among men, let him even be able to perform miracles before their wondering gaze, and give himself over to the most perilous sacrifices—the burning of his body in martyrdom—if he have not love he is nothing!

Heartily we desire to see the reciprocation of this love among all believers; and we will not neglect the present opportunity just briefly to specify certain hindrances to such a desirable consummation.

THERE MUST BE NO LAWS OF UNIFORMITY.

This is the great evil in Christendom; this is the reason why the one church is split up into sects. If you look into your New Testament, you find nothing about sects but what is condemnatory of them. In vain do you look for more than two

parties as recognised in the teaching of Christ and his apostles. The good, the bad ; the believing, the unbelieving ; the lovers of pleasure, and the lovers of God ; men traversing the broad way to destruction, men in the narrow path believing unto eternal life ; the sheep, and the goats ; the righteous, and the wicked ; the wheat, and the chaff. Consequently, if we have more than these two parties, if the wheat should sift itself into grains of uniform shape and size, it departs from the simplicity of Scripture. And all this is occasioned by the passing of laws for uniformity—as though in order to be christian men, all must think and act according to some human standard. As though all men must be bound to reflect one shade of sentiment, before they can manifest one kindred spirit.

When the apostle Paul found this sectarian tendency in his day—his heart was so full of love and grace to all christians—that he enquired, are ye not carnal ? “Whereas there is among you, envying and strife and divisions ; are ye not carnal, and walk as men ? For while one saith, I am of Paul ; and another, I am of Apollos : are ye not carnal ? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man ?” “Let no man glory in men.” said he. I suppose, therefore, as this apostle refused to have any sect called after his name ; as he blamed the

people when they were wont to say, "I am of Paul," so if his name had been Wesley, he would have blamed them equally for saying, "I am of Wesley." Nor is there anything more clear in his epistles than the obvious duty of the visible oneness of the church, notwithstanding many diversities. There should be no schism on account of what we believe, when we acknowledge Jesus Christ is Lord. All who fear God are accepted of God, and all who are accepted of God, should be accepted of one another. When the Act of Uniformity was passed years ago, how many were excluded from the pale of orthodoxy, who were yet children of God? And how many have been excluded, since men were only considered eligible for fellowship, according as they professed a particular belief? "If a man believe this, then he shall be a member; if not, he shall be counted as no member," even though he thoroughly love the Saviour and walk as he walked. Now, beware of binding men to such uniformity. Think for yourselves, and let others think. Search the Scriptures and form your own opinions, and allow all equal liberty. Let fundamentals bind one to another, and unite all together.

There will be diversities of creed, of judgment, and of preference. The training to which we may have been subjected in early life will more or less influence us. Nevertheless, all who prayerfully study

the Scriptures, will discover that without Jesus Christ there can be no salvation; without holiness no man can be saved. When we find a man who believes this is the truth, he is the true churchman; an heir of God through Christ for ever. His confidence is in Christ as his only Saviour, his only passport to heaven, his only pattern on earth; and he who thus has communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, is welcome to have communion with us in prosperity and in adversity; that so our fellowship with him may enhance his pleasures in the one case, or relieve his weight and lighten his burden in the other. In the apostles' days men differed. They however, disclaimed having any "dominion over their faith," and were well satisfied in being helpers of their joy. If differences of opinion were a reason for sects, then had the apostles been compelled to establish instead of censuring them.

If people can only worship with those who see eye to eye with them, they must be blind to the divine forbearance, and strange to christian courtesy. Bowing our knees before God and praying together, will be the most effectual method of becoming alike. Turning back to back in cold contempt is not the way to catch each others' resemblance. It may be called "zeal," but it is not according to knowledge. God forbid we should call people by different names whose aim is to be true christians, or that we should

want separate places of worship from others, who are hastening like ourselves to one common home above. Such a spirit would even shut a man out of heaven until he should have the true faith; by which the successors of Diotrephes intend their own ideas!

As much as anything the exclusiveness of our pulpits outrages the sublime oneness of our common religion. As to the charitableness of a platform once or twice a year, it is indeed a cold apology for such exclusiveness. We shall never be satisfied until we see the *pulpits* of Christendom as free to all sects, to all believers in Christ Jesus, as we do the platforms. If a free platform be right, a fettered pulpit is wrong. Evangelical alliances must become Sabbath day demonstrations. Further:

THERE MUST BE NO FALLIBLE HEADSHIP.

If we are to subscribe to certain opinions, we may well ask who is to be the framer of those opinions? Shall it be one individual? Shall it be half a dozen individuals? Or, will you fall back upon the protestant doctrine—"the Bible is sufficient?" Because, if certain tests are to be framed, they must have their framers. This introduces fallible headship. Christ protests against it. He says, "Call no man Lord, call no man master: One is your master, who is in heaven." It is of great importance that we should know our level—our

proper level—that we are not the doctors, but the disciples of Jesus Christ; that the church is to obey, not to decree; and that we step out of our province the moment that we think we have any authority to say that “such and such things are truths to be believed—we have tested them: and all men should conform to them.” Remember it is the very climax of pride to set bounds to men’s minds. To send them to their Bibles, foresworn to creeds is a sin. For our own part, we deem it one of our luxuries that we have not to frame any man’s creed, that we have merely to expound the Scriptures, and commend them as best we can, to the thoughts, judgment, and obedience of our fellows. Most cheerfully acceding to all the same amount of liberty which we possess.

We cannot express ourselves in stronger language on this point, than in the words of that celebrated minister, the Rev. Henry Melville. It shows me clearly, that wise and thinking men outgrow mere machinery; passing the bounds of sectarianism, their common sense, when in exercise, leads them to see they conform to much only from custom.

“Our religious opinions,” says Melville, “derive greatly their colouring from the religious school in which we may have been educated; or from the religious circle into which we may be thrown. Out of the mass of mankind, there is comparatively but a small number who are ever bold enough to think for

themselves. Opinions, especially in religion, are commonly taken at second hand ; and the tenacity with which they are maintained, contrasts often very strongly with the vagueness with which they are understood. That we call no man father or master on earth, is a precept which has lost none of its importance, since the day when it was first uttered by Christ to his disciples. At all times there have been in the church men who, although they may not be themselves anxious for pre-eminence in their attainments, have been thrust forward by their admirers into a sort of chair of authority ; and whatever sayings are uttered from this elevation, will be stoutly defended by a long swarm of their followers. We have in strict truth, little or nothing to do with what this author holds, or that preacher maintains ; every man should be his own divine ; and if we made our theology for ourselves, by prayerful study of the Bible, there would be less of that pugnacious adherence to some great decisions, against which it is vain to bring scriptural argument, since it is founded on partiality."

Now, what can be more sublime than this ! One of the most illustrious ministers of the established church, telling you that every man is to be his own divine ; in other words, that he is not to form his creed upon the thirty-nine articles, or to take his creed from Athanasias, or anything that was laid

down two or three hundred years ago—but that every man is to form his own theology by prayerful reading of the Holy Scriptures! Unquestionably, if this were universally acted out, we should soon have universal communion with all christians. We should meet them on common ground, going about like their master, doing good. There could be no dissenters, for there would be no one arrogant enough to say, “We are *the* church.” “Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect,” Paul says, “be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” Away therefore with the idea of uniformity of opinion, in order to fellowship in the worship of God, because, if we are only to worship together as we see alike, a private chamber will be a church sufficiently large. With sectarianism you will not merely divide churches but houses—for the husband may differ from the wife, and the child from both. Our Sabbaths will be separations. One will go one way, and another another way. And thus diversity of sentiment splitting up the one church into sects, and our families into units, we shall all be implicated in the error, or at least, be found in the attitude of Elijah, when he said, “I alone—I alone am left to serve thee.” O, be not little—be magnanimous! Let your souls grow. Be men in understanding. Do not wish to square other people’s views to yours. Think, and let think.

What happiness should we have, if we had "love one to another!" If we loved as Christ loves! O, to behold that day when all men shall come to one common brotherhood! The celebrated Robert Hall said, "this free communion may extinguish the Baptist denomination; but what of that, if the truth lives." Let none suppose that their denominations keep God's truth alive. God's truth *must* live. It is immortal in its nature, because it is truth. Error cannot destroy it. We care not if all the sects of Christendom were utterly withered, because the truth as made known to us in the Scriptures, would still remain for our guidance; and with the Bible alone we should do far better, and see more clearly, and unite more harmoniously, than with human systems which, discussing foolish questions, ever gender strife. Then, again,

THERE IS THE SPIRIT OF JUDGING.

When we busy ourselves about others, we always neglect our individuality. Let us not be hasty to judge others, but let us judge ourselves. Let us remember the beam in our own eye, and we shall have less time to discuss the mote in our brother's eye. Every one should think of his own possible mistakes, of his own probable weaknesses. Each one should emulate the apostle—not as though I had already attained—either were already perfect. I

know nothing against myself, yet am I not hereby justified. He that judgeth me is the Lord. He still lived to learn, though he had been in the third heaven. If we have not had such an elevation, what should make us less teachable? And what, then, under the consciousness of individual defects should hinder the universal communion of christians? And what would the world lose by the withering of all party names? O, that the communion of saints might be what it was when they all met at Jerusalem! "All that believed," it is said, "were TOGETHER." Not that they *saw* eye to eye any more than we do now. Yet they were together in breaking of bread, in fellowship, and in prayers.

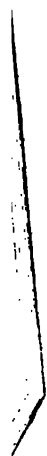
And this oneness it is, which is to bring the world to Christ: "that all may believe that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." When the world sees the church is one; one in spirit, one in action. Kind and tender, sympathetic and generous, forgiving and forbearing—then shall the wide world be won over to him. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. But as yet we have not charity to love the whole church, we repeat, and, therefore, we have not strength enough to convert the whole world!

We have given a beggarly and distorted representation of religion to the world, by our discordant

demeanour; and thus men have cavilled, and have sneered, and have even made a boast that in their wickedness, they could agree more thoroughly than men who profess that they are followers of God, going heavenward. But these things ought not to be. Christ loved his people to the uttermost; his forbearance and tenderness and patience knew no limits. He charged them to follow him, and if one had a quarrel against another, he was to forgive him unto seventy times seven. Thus they were to bear in recollection that he loved them, and in order to show that they were his disciples, they were to "have love one to another."

Professing to be related to one common Father in heaven, and to be redeemed from the curse of the law by one common Saviour, let us seek to be imbued with one common spirit, that we may all exemplify one common brotherhood. Like the stars in the skies, not shining to put out each other's lustre, not wishing to shine *alone* in the heavens; nor supposing because one star *differeth* from another star, there is darkness or confusion. But let us so strive all to shine together, that the midnight of the moral universe may be thoroughly illuminated, that gross darkness may pass away, and that the true light may appear! Then shall the glory of God be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. "*Together*," "*Together*,"—that word involves the harmony of

heaven, the concord of the future world, the home of the saints—all is epitomised in that one word “together.” Let it be the bliss of earth; let it be the study of each individual christian. Let not strife and schisms, separations and sects, be the blot of believers on earth, as hoping hereafter to join in the gladdening chorus of praise for salvation in a future world. Be it ours while on earth to be pitiful, and to be courteous; to be kind and tender-hearted; to put on bowels of mercy. To exemplify the spirit of our Lord and Saviour who, under all circumstances would prove himself the perfect embodiment of the love of God. So let his love constrain you all; let his “new commandment”—ay! as fresh and as fragrant now as ever—let his “new commandment,” sink down into all our hearts: and if we have been shy of one another as belonging to a sect; if as belonging to one party, we have been cold or careless or envious of another party—may we henceforth remember that as brethren, we are all members of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, and that he is the only head; and that the only way in which we can prove the genuineness of our religion, to the satisfaction of angels and men, is by dwelling upon, and living out, the test left us in the words we have read: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples—if ye have love one to another!”



By the same Author ; Third Edition, Cloth, Gilt Edges.

Price 5s.

CALVARY, OR THE CROSS OF CHRIST,

QUOTATIONS FROM REVIEWERS.

“We do not wonder that this very admirable book has reached a third edition.”

“Mr. DANIELL unites pith with grace, force with ease, vigour with fluency, and antithetical point with a mellifluous smoothness.”

“Clear, consecutive, compact, logical without preciseness, orderly without parade”

“Religious readers will not fail to be struck with the originality and sterling value of much of the matter on this exhaustless though familiar theme.”

Also, by the same Author ; Third Thousand, Limp Cloth. Price 2s.

SPIRITUAL ANATOMY.

QUOTATIONS FROM REVIEWER.

“MR. DANIELL, we perceive, is an original thinker.”

“MR. DANIELL, as much as any preacher of the gospel, insists upon faith—living faith.”

“His preaching is eminently practical ; there is a vigour in it from first to last, which evidences itself throughout.”

“So eminently instructive is MR. DANIELL’s preaching, that it would be impossible for any intelligent person to hear him without profit.”

“At times we may be disposed to differ from him at first, but if we go to the Scriptures we shall find plenty of texts which will go far to prove the probability of his conclusions.”

And, by the same Author ; Third Thousand, Limp Cloth. Price 2s.

THE CHRIST OF HOLY SCRIPTURE ;

AND

THE GOSPEL OF OUR SALVATION.



